



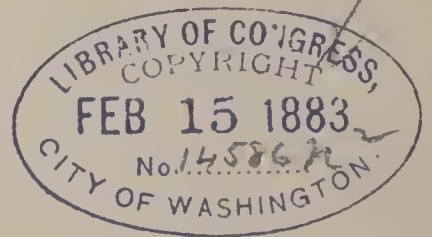
CHRISTIAN WORK

AND

CONSOLATION:

THE PROBLEM OF AN EFFECTIVE AND
HAPPY LIFE.

BY ABEL STEVENS, LL.D.



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PART FIRST.

CHRISTIAN WORK.

CHRISTIAN WORK AND CONSOLATION.

WORK.

I.

HUMAN AGENCY IN THE SCHEME OF THE WORLD.

“THERE is purer gold in the hoof of the camel than in the crown of the Caliph,” says the Arabian proverb. There is Oriental wisdom as well as metaphor in the saying. The gold of the crown of the Caliph remains of the same intrinsic value; the camel bears the merchandise of the Moslem over the desert and redoubles its value.

Work is one of the most intrinsic things of our world. It is so valuable that it puts value into things that would otherwise be valueless. A great fact is this—a chief fact in the divine programme of the world.

The perfection of the world is in its apparent imperfection. Nature presupposes the supplementary action of man. Her most precious things are crude in her mines or her soils; man must roll up his sleeves and dig them out. He must plow the

soil, and scatter the minute seeds, and Nature will yield bread for her millions, and her plains will "shake like Lebanon." The potato is a crude root, the peach a poisonous product, till man's labor renders them edible. There is not a flower in your garden which does not owe its luxuriance and beauty to the labor of man on its inferior forms. Human labor is, then, an integral part of the scheme of nature; her perfection is in the fact that she leaves her crude materials for the voluntary activity of her highest factor—man.

There is a great deal of natural theology in this fact. A genuine philosopher could make a good theistic argument out of it. The elementary provisions of nature for man are boundless; and man has, in his faculty of labor, boundless power to complement her provisions. This, we repeat, is the scheme of God in our world; and in it is the perfection of what we call nature—that is to say, of the divine order of things.

Labor is not the primal curse recorded by Moses; that is, want, necessitating *excessive* labor—the "sweat of the brow." But all good work tends to mitigate the curse, and to reduce the amount of labor by improving its forms. It is not an improbable hope that man may, at last, reach the *minimum* of toil, by the multiplication of insensible factors of work, by instrumental labor—affording the *maximum* of wholesome leisure for intellectual and

social enjoyment, and for all the other higher capabilities of his life.

It is a beautiful fact, and a grand *datum* for natural theology, that whatsoever is normal to a man's constitution, or to the natural conditions of his existence, is consoling to him, is inherently felicitous. All true work is such.

Rightly conducted, physical labor invigorates his physical life, and renders it joyous with that delicious comfort which we call health. His appetite, his sleep, his whole consciousness of animal life, are sanctified, we may well say, by faithful work.

The greatest labor is that of brain workers. With not a few its beginnings are wearisome and repulsive; but he that works thoroughly soon acquires the habit of mental labor; and the habit, once acquired, becomes one of the most exhaustless and refined sources of enjoyment known to man. No great scholar or artist works merely for money, nor even for reputation; he works because he loves his work—it is the felicity of his life. It is asked, Why is it so? The only answer is, God has made it so. An inactive or unproductive man is a miserable man, and the whole order of the universe tends to make him so.

One of the most interesting facts about this divine order of the world, as we have called it—one of its most striking bearings on natural theology—is the incontestable truth that the happiness of the

worker is graduated to the gradations of his work. In proportion as it ascends does his soul rise in improvement and blessedness. Physical labor, rightly conducted, gives health, appetite, sleep, allays the passions, multiplies material comforts. Intellectual labor opens boundless vistas of thought and of ideal life to the student. But if he rises higher, if he enters with strenuous working power into the moral sphere, how much more refined, sublime, divine even, become his consciousness, his happiness! He that achieves a great material work finds, probably, in his achievement alone, a greater consolation than in any pecuniary advantage it may afford him; and this is God's benediction on his labor. He that discovers, in his midnight study, a new truth, knows an incomparably higher joy; and we can hardly wonder that Newton became somewhat insane when he demonstrated to himself the true theory of the universe. He earned no money by the discovery; no toiler in the fields or the mines had labored as he had; but he felt that he had scaled the heavens and was striding among the suns. He had come nearer than any other philosophical student to the center of the universe—the throne of God—and its ineffable light dazzled and overwhelmed him with seraphic joy. And this was God's benediction on his work—work done in retirement, but to resound forever through the intellectual world.

But there is better work; and, what is particularly notable about it, is the fact that this higher work is the least of all restricted to particular, adventitious conditions—is most open to all earnest, sincere souls. It is moral work. Muscle is necessary to the successful physical worker; special brain faculty to the successful intellectual worker; but the highest work, moral work—that which most hallows life, most refines and ennobles the soul, most consoles the heart—is practicable to all. Nay, often is it the case that in the most humble conditions of existence, in the ignoring of a just but disparaged or persecuted cause, in work in the abysses of poverty and vice, in the fires of martyrdom for divine but rejected truth, in the exemplary patience and heroism of a sick chamber or a death-bed, the best work out of heaven is done by men—work in which the soul grows angelic, and over which angels spread their protective wings.

And not only is this the best work, it is the happiest; as it brings men into nearer affinities with angels and with God, it partakes, also, somewhat of their bliss. The consciousness of no man on this planet is happier than that of him who suffers for the right. Even self-sacrifice for the right is self-salvation. Self-sacrifice is often the truest self-interest. No victory is sublimer than that of “faith” which “overcometh the world!” sublimer words than could ever be applied to Alexander the Great,

who was said to have conquered the world. No man has ever shared his own resources with a perishing sufferer, (especially in "the name of a disciple,") without finding more enjoyment in his diminished means than he could in the selfish retention of them all.

Is it really so? No thoughtful man doubts it in his heart. If it is again asked, Why is it so? The only reply again is, God has made it so. This is his programme of the world. The fact that such is the condition of man on this planet, is proof that a moral world environs the planet; that there is a beneficent God ruling over it, and that there are beyond it transcendent destinies for the souls thus conditioned upon it.

II.

LAY ACTIVITY IN CHURCH WORK.

THOUGH theologians differ somewhat about the extent, if not the nature, of the "sanctification" taught by the holy Scriptures, they agree respecting the "consecration" which the Gospel enjoins, and this agreement suffices for our present purpose. Christian consecration comprehends the whole man and all that pertains to him—his faculties, his time, his property—all, even in the most secular pursuits, must thenceforward be a "service as to the Lord and not to men." The faith, on which the divine acceptance of the consecration is conditioned, is a vital and *working* principle. The "perfect love," which follows, "fulfills the law," because it is essentially practical as well as "full of peace and joy in the Holy Ghost." Hence the revival of primitive Christianity, which we assume to be a characteristic of our day, is attended with a great increase of religious enjoyment and zeal and work.

This is a natural, an inevitable result. A fervid, joyous, religious spirit will spontaneously be a working one. Protestantism has greatly advanced in lay work within our own generation. New methods of lay labor have, indeed, called for more

lay energy; but what has created these new methods? What but the increased force of religious life, produced by its increased confidence and joy? Faith "*works by love*;" and love is the most potent moral power of the universe. In the pulpit or out of the pulpit a joyous, confiding, loving spirit is an invincible power. It animates the features, it tunes the very voice, it kindles the heart of the evangelic laborer. It irradiates him with a halo of magnetic cheerfulness which cannot fail to attract all who are around him. "The joy of the Lord is your strength," says a prophet, and this joy comes of a sense of entire harmony with God—entire consecration and faith. Many a man of real talent fails through a whole ministerial life because of an unhappy "manner." Many a parent fails of the conversion of his children, and even sends them forth, at last, disbelieving, if not disgusted with religion, because of his own lack of the "sweetness and light" with which his piety should have endeared and illuminated his home. It is, then, a blessed reform that the Churches are passing through in this new era of Christian life—this era of spiritual joy and of the "full assurance of faith."

"Lay activity," "lay evangelism," "lay co-operation;" these are phrases which have had, within a few years, a strikingly increased currency among us. They indicate much more than they express; they indicate the new epoch of lay Christian work

which is to hasten the evangelization of the world. To the best of Christian thinkers the long delay of the universal triumph of the Gospel must be a matter of perplexity. There would seem to be something essentially defective in our ecclesiastical organizations as the reason of this apparent failure. That defect may possibly be found precisely here—the too exclusive confinement of the labors of Christian propagandism to official, to clerical instrumentality—the fact that the great mass of Christians have not been sufficiently taught and trained for practical work in the Church.

There is danger, we admit, of an opposite error. We cannot be too careful in guarding the divinely appointed functions of the Church. The ministry is not a priesthood, but it is more; it is a *ministry*. According to Scripture it must stand as long as the Church stands; without it, without its due professional or intellectual preparation, and its habitual pastoral responsibility, Church work, and all Church life, would, sooner or later, degenerate into either fanaticism or inanimation. Quakerism is, at least, a partial exemplification of the fact. But increased, even universal and intense, lay activity need not interfere with the official pastorate. It may be made entirely and powerfully subsidiary to it. It may be made to gravitate around it and to mightily abet and invigorate it. This has been the case quite invariably in England, Scotland, America,

and Australia, where lay co-operation has become conspicuous in late years. Never has the regular ministry been better recognized than in these countries, within the period of modern "revivals" and of increased lay activity.

On the other hand, we have only to look to the continental Churches of Europe for a proof of the contrary result of the contrary policy. In the Protestant Churches of the Continent there has been little or no encouragement given to lay evangelical work since the first enthusiasm of the Reformation subsided. Church work has been there almost exclusively official, clerical; the laity have been mere hearers, spectators in the evangelical field, not even giving their money directly, but indirectly through the State treasury, by taxes. What has been the result? The Churches have been slowly dying for generations. Symptoms of remaining life have been merely sporadic. The ministry has had all things in its own hands, under the State authority, and has watchfully repressed any important lay attempts to revive the Church. This policy has reacted almost fatally on the ministry itself. It has been losing its moral power over the people, and, at the same time, losing its relative importance in the State. The continental Protestant clergy are now poorly supported, are invidiously treated by the State, and, by consequence, have generally lost their old social impor-

tance; they are no more influential in society except in rare cases of intellectual pre-eminence or literary reputation. The spectacle of their actual social status is, indeed, deplorable, and becomes more so every year. It would be intolerable to Anglican and American pastors. Meanwhile, throughout England, Scotland, and America, the social, the financial, and the official status of the ministry is continually advancing.

Why? Obviously it is because the people at large have augmented interest in religion. And why this interest? Obviously it is, to a great extent, owing to the increase of lay labor and lay responsibility. Silence your laymen, shut up your Sunday-schools, discontinue your popular devotional meetings; in other words, do as the continental clergy of Europe have done, and you will soon be in their condition. The logic of the subject is as clear as light. Set your people at work all around you, and they will soon love that work, and love you for your work's sake. This is human nature; but, still better, it is Christian nature.

Did not Christianity start in this way? It had, indeed, its "official" apostles, with their miraculous power over life and death, over men and demons; but the chief power that gave it triumph through the Roman world was its aggregate spiritual energy, put forth by the mass of its humble but consecrated people. Every saint was then a "wit-

ness" for Christ. The common people, dispersed by the persecutions, told every-where the story of the cross, and every-where the cross rose radiant and invincible amid the darkness of universal heathenism, until the classic mythology vanished before it, until it flamed out in the heavens before the eyes of Constantine, and the imperial persecutors, the Senate, the army, the throne, succumbed to its power. The ministry was great in these triumphs, but it was comparatively small amid the universal labors, heroism, and martyrdom of the Church—the devoted, suffering, triumphant people. And how the people loved and died for the ministry! May God restore those old victorious times again, and right speedily!

This is what we need: the whole Church roused to work and prayer; the whole Christian world set in motion for the final overthrow of the powers of darkness; the whole Christian population ordered with resounding trumpets out of camp and forward on the march. The layman of superiority ordered to his place and work; the man of mediocrity assigned to his; the man of inferiority admonished that even he must find his work and do it with his might, or be cast "into outer darkness," according to the parable of the "talents." Bring the universal Church to this, and you will save the universal race forthwith. We have failed just here, and the cross of Christ bears the reproach of our failure.

III.

LAY ACTIVITY IN THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH.

THE increase, in our day, of lay activity in Church work, we have said, is a revival of a characteristic idea of the primitive Church. The great Reformers, both German and Helvetian, knew the importance of this idea, and taught it in their doctrine of the "Priesthood of the People"—a doctrine which was, with them, perfectly reconcilable with a distinctly organized ministry. They denied that Christianity had any technical, or clerical, priesthood, and they thus struck a disastrous blow at the overshadowing ecclesiasticism of Rome. They asserted the common priesthood of the whole Church, (in accordance with St. Peter's teaching,) and the high priesthood of Christ, and admitted no other idea of priesthood. Believing that the priesthood is inherent in, and common to, the aggregate Church, and teaching that the regular official "ministry" is a body of men to whom the Church only delegates, for convenience, its common work, they insist that this common work remains, a common and inherent right and responsibility of the people, and that the latter are bound to perform it, in one form or another, to their utmost ability. Mean-

while, no theologians ever taught more emphatically, that God raises up and divinely calls individual men to meet the practical necessity of the delegation of this common work to a select and publicly authorized body of pastors, who, however, can never give the people a dispensation from their responsibility for its performance, so far as they have opportunity to attend to it. This is the genuine evangelical theory of the subject, and the chief cause, under God, of the triumph and success of the primitive Church.

It is astonishing that, with the Bible in our hands, any of us should doubt on this subject. The inception of the early Church system is clear enough, in the Acts of the Apostles. When difficulties arose in the little Church, at Jerusalem, about the distribution of its alms, the apostles appealed to the people, the laity, advising them to select, from among themselves, men fitted to take charge of such matters, while they (the apostles) should give themselves wholly to prayer and preaching. Being all Jews, or Jewish proselytes, these first Christians naturally turned to their antecedent usages for examples or rules in their new circumstances. Some order, or system, had become necessary in the infant Christian cause; and, with the selection of officers, as requested by the apostles, they needed forms and regulations of the offices. Now, notice particularly, the fact, that they did not turn to their

old temple system, the Levitical, or priestly, system of their nation, for these examples, but to the more popular, the especially lay system of their synagogue—the synagogue which is never mentioned in the writings of Moses, and which was a sort of “town hall,” an institution for the convenience of the provincial towns and city suburbs of the Jews, where could assemble on the Sabbath such of the people as could not conveniently go up to the Temple at Jerusalem. For the divine system of the Jews was represented at the Temple; there the priesthood appeared. The priests had their own towns; the synagogue was eminently the assembling place of the people, and its proceedings were conducted by the laity. An “old man” was usually elected to preside; a younger man was elected to take charge of the order, alms, etc., of the assembly. The law and the prophets were read in it by laymen, after which the presiding “old man” gave out the word, (as reported in the book of Acts,) “If any man has a word of exhortation let him say on,” and the laity in general could thus share in the exercises. The old man, or “elder,” was, in our Greek Scriptures, called *presbyter*, a synonymous word; the younger man, or “servant,” was called, in Greek, *deacon*, a synonymous word. They were both designated to office by the *imposition of hands*, a ceremony never used in the consecration of the Jewish priests, (for these were anointed like kings,)

but used in all municipal appointments to office among the Jews.

When a number of synagogues arose in the large cities or provinces, their officers, naturally enough, met together occasionally for the consideration of business interesting them all. On these occasions one of the most venerable of the "elders" was appointed to preside; he was called "superintendent"—in the Greek Scriptures the synonymous word *Episcopos* was used; in our translation the Anglo-Saxon *Bischop*, or *Bishop*, is etymologically the same word. He was not a prelate, but according to an old Latin phrase, *primus inter pares*—first among equals.

Thus we see the simple historical genesis of the whole Christian order, or polity. It had a lay origin; it was all, except the apostolate, borrowed from the lay system of the synagogue, and claimed no sanction from the priestly system of the Temple—the Levitical order. That corrupt tendency, (natural, perhaps, to power and office,) which developed at last into the immense, overshadowing ecclesiasticism of Romanism, soon made imposition of hands, or ordination, a "sacrament," and the offices of deacon, and presbyter, and bishop, divine "orders," indispensable to Church validity, and invested with mysterious if not magical powers. The apostolic Church exemplified them, but never enjoined them.

When the first Church at Jerusalem adopted

these arrangements, they selected "Stephen, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas;" these were all laymen, but they were evangelical workmen, and even worked miracles; and the record immediately adds, that "the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly." Stephen and Philip, we know, became signally useful and historical; they preached as our lay preachers do; but they preached as all laymen, of any gift of speech, preached in those days. For what was preaching then? It was not the formal discourse of later times; it was the telling of the "story of the cross;" it was the predication, promulgation, of the new faith, in any and every way possible—mostly in a colloquial way. The formal sermon, with its "firstly," "secondly," and "thirdly," was not known till hundreds of years later under Origen. Philip "preached," says the record, and at one time to but one hearer, in the chariot of the Ethiopian nobleman, and thus founded, says tradition, the Ethiopian Church. Stephen preached gloriously before the tribunal which condemned him at Jerusalem, and made the concluding prayer of his service under the pelting missiles of his murderers. The first Christian martyr was pre-eminently a lay preacher.

Thus the idea of lay activity pervades the whole structure of primitive Christianity. Even women

were active in Christian work, notwithstanding the cautions necessary, according to Paul, not to provoke too much the prevalent Oriental prejudices regarding them. Paul recommended to the Churches the deaconess Phœbe; and for several centuries deaconesses were kept up, and even *ordained*, in the Greek Church.

Neander, one of the best of Church historians, says that "The Jewish antithesis, of clergy and laity, was, at first, unknown among Christians; and it was only as men fell back from the evangelical to the Jewish point of view that the idea of the general Christian priesthood of all believers gave place, more or less completely, to that of the special priesthood or clergy."

We have given this historical argument, not to favor any particular form of lay labor, but in favor of the general idea. It is, we repeat, an apostolic idea—an epochal idea—and, if rightly revived, it will make a new era in modern Church history. Its revival in our times seems to be a divine inspiration touching the inmost consciousness of the Church, and awakening within it the conviction that the primitive consecration to Church work must be restored, as a consequence of personal consecration to Christ; that this is the one thing needful for the completion of the great Reformation; that this alone can meet the exigencies of modern Christendom; that in this can alone be found the

reaction which shall defeat and dispel the skepticism and worldliness that now so generally menace Christianity—that such a reaction must be sought not in speculation, but in action. Christian scholars have their task, indisputably, in regard to the new forms of unbelief, but there is no power on earth, no conceivable demonstration of Christianity, equal to that of a thorough and universal embodiment of it in Church life and labor. Set all the Church praying, preaching, working, and it will become to its foes “terrible as an army with banners;” and will, thenceforth, go on, triumphantly marching round the world.

An English journal says: “There is a Church in Kòbe, Japan, the standard of admission to which is probably quite as high as that of any Church in any Christian land. Of the twenty male members of this Church, thirteen go out, as lay preachers, to six stations, every week, and four more every month. Every man, not prevented by age or other infirmities, is pledged to active lay effort, at his own charges; and this pledge is made a condition of admission to membership.” This Church has evidently caught the primitive idea of the relation of the laity to Church work.

We are inclined to think that evangelical foreign missions, generally, have more scriptural usages, in this respect, than Churches in our domestic fields. Their local exigencies suggest these usages more,

perhaps, than any theory of the apostolic constitution of Christianity. They are not the less apostolic, however, and the example is worthy of the imitation of our older religious communities. The Baptists, so successful among the Karens, have succeeded mostly by such lay labors. The Wesleyans, in the South Sea Islands, have accomplished nine tenths of their remarkable triumphs in the same manner. They trained nearly all their converts to active Christian labors; and, from King George downward, their male laity, who had any capacity for public speaking, were commissioned and sent forth, from island to island, on Sundays, as lay or "local" preachers. No Church can be thus trained and be unsuccessful in any land, heathen or civilized. The weakest one in Christendom would become strong and triumphant, if conducted on this apostolic method.

"Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord." He said it through one of the greatest of his *official* witnesses, Isaiah, the "Messianic prophet;" but he said it to his *people*, the "common people." Indisputably the living ministry is, next to the revealed word, the appointed, the perpetual, witness of divine truth in the world. It is armed with divine sanctions; it has indefeasible rights and functions; and the Church that endeavors to do without it must, sooner or later, decline, and at last die out. But, on the other hand, the Church that repudiates the witnessing function of the people—the "priest-

hood of the people," as Luther and the other Reformers called it—sooner or later becomes a mere system of *churchism*, of ecclesiasticism, rather than of Christianity. The two should be co-operative, the unofficial one an adjunct to the official; otherwise they both degenerate.

Such was primitive Christianity; and this fact is the chief solution of the problem of the marvelous success of the original Church—that sublime problem which the skeptical historian, Gibbon, endeavored, so elaborately, to explain away, in order to disparage Christianity. He mentions the early lay activity indeed, and his main purpose was to show that the preternatural influence, claimed by Christianity as the efficient cause of its success, is a fallacy; but, as that divine power works, according to the scheme of the Gospel, through human instrumentality, the true question is, In what form was the divine influence so wondrously effective? The real historical answer is, that it was in the co-operative activity of an official ministry and a universal lay priesthood. "Ye are," said Peter, "a *peculiar* people," "a royal *priesthood*"—a peculiar people because a royal priesthood.

We have seen what the sacred history says on the subject, as recorded by Luke in the Acts. The laymen selected by the people, and sanctioned by the apostles, to attend to the alms and other temporalities of the Church, in order that the apostles

might attend exclusively to their own superior work as its founders, were thus designated to special lay work. But we immediately learn that these laymen, and their lay brethren generally, were heartily at work in the spiritual as well as temporal interests of the incipient Church, the common brotherhood. And what was the result? Not only the "word of God increased, the number of the disciples being multiplied in Jerusalem greatly," but now arose a very natural consequence, the enemy was alarmed, and persecution began; but against whom? Against the Church in general, with the apostles at its head, unquestionably; but against these lay laborers in particular, for here was a special thing against Stephen most particularly, for he was apparently the leader of the lay-workers. All the parties of the enemy, all sects of the Jews, arose against him—"the Libertines, and Cyrenians, and Alexandrians, and them of Cilicia and of Asia, *disputing with Stephen.*" The persecution raged, and soon Stephen became its first victim, forever glorious as the protomartyr of Christianity. The Church is dispersed abroad, but not the apostles; they are needed yet at the head-quarters to guide all things in the new exigency. Philip is proclaiming the Cross in Samaria, and a great "reformation" sets in there. As soon as possible the apostles, concealed or sheltered at Jerusalem, sent out Peter and John to the scene. So the new faith has burst

the geographical limits of the old Judaism, and the Gospel has entered triumphantly the Gentile world; and even the apostles seem at first hardly to know how to credit the glorious fact. Under the guidance and governance of the apostles all possible talents of the Christian people were thus used, in all possible ways, for the outspread of the faith; and the Gospel was thus diffused speedily over the Roman empire, and over the known world.

IV.

TEXTS FROM RUSKIN AND CHALMERS.

“**T**O read, to think, to love, to hope, to pray, these are things that make men happy. They have power to do these things; they never will have power to do more. The world’s prosperity or adversity depends upon our knowing and teaching these few things; but upon iron and glass, steam and electricity, in no wise.” So says Ruskin, with considerable truth, but with the need of considerable qualification. The writings of few living men have afforded more numerous or more precious contributions to the intellectual currency of the day. Brilliant coins of his are in almost universal circulation. He has prompted many a young and sensitive soul to generous aspirations and high thought, not only in his favorite specialty of art, but in matters of taste, literature, and morals generally. A most suggestive writer is he, and we wish his books were in the hands of all our young literary aspirants, notwithstanding the qualification which his oracular or absolute way of speaking requires.

To “read” is, indeed, one of “the things that make men happy.” Gibbon said that, if the alternative were imposed upon him, to choose the scep-

ters and treasures of the world, on the one hand, or his books on the other, he would decide for the latter. Montesquieu affirmed that there was no chagrin or trouble that he could not find effective refuge from in the sanctuary of his library. There are few intellectual men who would not indorse these testimonies.

To think is a still higher happiness, though not so generally practicable in the sense of original or creative thought—the kind that yields the felicitous consciousness of life and power to which Ruskin alludes. To think profoundly is the hardest work in the world; but to the trained or habitual thinker it is one of the highest enjoyments. It is the process of the acquisition of truth, and what function of the soul can be higher or happier than this? Lessing declared that, if God should offer him the privilege of attaining knowledge by immediate intuition, rather than by the labor of study, he would pray to be left with the latter necessity, for the happiness of study more than compensates its labor. And he was right; God's method must be right, and this is God's method; God has given us intuitions only to start with in the acquisition of truth. Logic, in probable as well as in mathematical reasoning, only *proceeds* from axioms or intuitions; the rest of the process is work; and, though the hardest work known to man, yet is it full of conscious power and joy.

The other "things that make men happy," as mentioned by Ruskin, will hardly be questioned—to "love, to hope, to pray," they are the very best things for man in the moral sphere of his life. A loving heart may have much to suffer even by its affections, by the disappointments or defeats of love; but love is in its own essence felicitous, and its very griefs are sweet and salutary. Hope has its alloys, and the suffering of "hope deferred" has been proverbial from the earliest ages; but hope deferred is infinitely better than no hope. And there is no condition of human probation on this planet where hope may not be attained by prayer—prayer, to which Christianity subordinates, in a certain sense, the boundless resources of God himself for the help of his most suffering, yet most noble creature, man. Most noble, though most suffering, for, as Pascal says, in that fragmentary but immortal monument of intellect, his "*Pensées*," "Man, though the feeblest reed in nature, is a thinking reed; it is not necessary that the whole universe should arm itself to crush him, for a vapor, a drop of water, can do so; but, if the universe should crush him, yet is he nobler than that which slays him, for he *knows* that he dies, and the universe knows nothing of the advantage it has over him."

Yes, these are indeed "things that make men happy." The fine English thinker is correct thus

far; and a grateful fact it is that "men have power to do these things." But every remaining clause of the citation needs qualification. It is not true that "men will never have power to do more." They have power to do more; they have always had power to do more; and it is by doing more that they will bring this world to its right condition at last.

The world does depend upon "iron and glass, steam and electricity," as well as upon "reading, thinking, loving, hoping, and praying;" and we should bless God that it does. The toilers in the fields and workshops of the world are true workers for the world's prosperity. The inventor, especially, is among the best benefactors of humanity. England's future depends upon steam, and may yet depend upon electricity. Should the predicted failure of her coal mines be a fact, she must find in electricity, or some analogous means, a new motor, or fall from her rank among the great civilizing powers of the earth. Does not such a fact involve "the world's prosperity or adversity?"

Was Watt's invention of the steam-engine no contribution to the world's prosperity? Its present application, though but partial compared with its prospective uses, has been estimated to be equivalent to the manual capability for work of five planets like ours.

Ruskin would have us "think" as a means of

happiness, but thinking, to be advantageous, must be productive; and what thinking has been more so than that bestowed by Watt on his own invention? It is a result of long and scientific thought. It never could have been achieved without scientific thought. Watt, early perceiving that he did not possess this adequately for his great conception, threw himself into a Scotch university, and studied under one of the best chemists of his age—studied the laws of heat under Professor Black, himself one of the greatest original discoverers. The steam-engine involved profound knowledge in both physics and mathematics. It is an embodiment of both the genius of Watt and the science of Black, to which, if we may reverently say it, the Almighty One superadded somewhat of his own omnipotence; and thus was given to the world the greatest material instrument of its improvement.

Gutenberg, Fulton, Whitney, Arkwright, Morse, and Howe have given similar momentum to civilization, to civilization in its very best material form—the practical arts which ameliorate human life. Far-seeing men presume now to hope, as we have intimated, that, by such improvements, the *minimum* of labor, and thereby the *maximum* of leisure for more refined occupations, may at last be attained; and the race, no longer subject to servile toil, be free for that moral and intellectual culture which is obviously its noblest function.

Thus it is by “iron, glass, steam, and electricity”—in other words, by material improvements, the results of hard study and hard toil—that the race is at last to attain a condition in which it can more readily and universally “read, think, love, hope, and pray.”

Meanwhile, as it advances toward that condition, it may seem, to a narrow-minded observer, only to recede from it. With every “labor-saving” invention there may seem to be only an increase of labor. To a clearer vision this, however, is but a proof of the beneficence of such improvements. By facilitating the supply of human needs or conveniences they increase the demand for them. These thus become more diffused. The privations of the lower classes are diminished, and their homes are furnished with comforts which were, before, the possession only of the higher conditions of life. Of course, therefore, labor is multiplied in spite of “labor-saving inventions,” and, indeed, by them. It is a consolatory fact; it is a process of amelioration; and, with whatever incidental evils, it must go on with every new invention, till the resources of nature, for the improvement of human life, shall be so far developed as to yield their *maximum* supply, and yield it to the *minimum* of toil. This is the end to which all true civilization tends. This is the divine order of the world. It is for this that men are placed here as “thinking, loving, hoping,

praying" beings. Let them not then despise "iron, glass, steam, or electricity," but thoughtfully, lovingly, hopefully, and prayerfully appropriate them as God's benedictions. Christian consecration is not consecration of the soul exclusive of its exterior conditions: it is consecration of both itself and its conditions.

Were we asked, What is the summary condition of human happiness in this world? we should be inclined to reply that (presupposing Ruskin's specifications) the supreme one is *work*. It is not work, we have affirmed, that is meant in the Mosaic malediction on the fall of man. It is by genuine work, especially thought embodied in modes of work, as we have just shown, that the curse is to be remedied, and invention supersede toil. Thomas Jefferson (borrowing, however, from an older authority) says that he who can show us how to make two spears of grass grow where only one could grow before, is a benefactor of all mankind. We hear much of the evils of overwork, and there certainly is a class of eager men, who thus destroy themselves; but could the statistics of civilized life be accurately given, in this respect, we would find infinitely more suffering from deficient than from excessive labor. Adam Clarke says of the maxim about too many irons in the fire, "that it is an abominable old lie." "Have them all in," he says, "shovel, tongs, poker, and all." All proverbs need qualification, his own

as well as the one he would correct. It is all important to understand well the complementary relation of "work and play." One thing, nevertheless, may be asserted, almost as absolutely or oracularly as any of the sayings of Ruskin, namely, that whosoever is thoroughly occupied can never be thoroughly unhappy. Presupposing some degree of wisdom and virtue, labor is the law of happiness, and beneficent labor, especially in the forms of religious usefulness, its supreme law. Many a man to whom life is a grievous mystery and the world an arid desert, would find both luminous with the glory of God if he would but plunge into useful work—especially work consecrated by prayer.

Chalmers was a mighty worker as well as a profound thinker. He was quickened by reading Wilberforce's "Practical View of Christianity," to an energetic religious life, and, not content with his masterly pulpit efforts—like his splendid *Astronomical Discourses*, which commanded so much interest among the highest minds of his times—he devoted himself to all kinds of hard work for the poor and neglected classes, holding meetings for them in suburban halls and private houses, and studying the best applications of economical science for the relief of their sufferings. His practical zeal flamed out often in powerful exhortations to Christian men to work—to work mightily; to wrestle with the evils of the day like men in battle. "O man," he ex-

claims, in one of his writings, "O man, live for something! Do good, and leave behind you a monument of virtue that the storms of time can never destroy."

Work, it is the legitimate, the normal function of man. It is not, we repeat, the "primeval curse," as some do vainly and profanely teach. The divine record says that unfallen man was ordered to till the garden of Eden itself. Man was made a husbandman when he was made a man. Few things could have more surely doomed him to fall than perpetual idleness. Labor does not more certainly make the muscles grow, and the brain become vigorous and inventive, than it develops and energizes the higher faculties.

Let us not delude ourselves with the thought that we cannot do effective, and even grand moral work, without ostensibly grand means or opportunities. "Ostensibly grand," we say; for all opportunities of moral usefulness are intrinsically grand—grand in their results to souls, grand in their eternal compensations to ourselves. "Write your name," continues Chalmers, in speaking of what are considered the humble or ordinary means of usefulness, "write your name in kindness, love, and mercy, on the hearts of thousands you come in contact with year by year, and you will never be forgotten. No, your words, your deeds, will be as legible on the hearts you leave behind, as the stars on the brow of

the evening. Good deeds shine as brightly on the earth as the stars of heaven." He speaks eloquently but logically also. Is not his thought that of the old Hebrew prophet who declares that they who are "wise [wise in this way] shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever." That is sublime—worthy of the speech of God uttered by man. You, even you, humblest child of God, may thus make your obscure life sublime. In the circle of your home, in the limited range of your neighborhood, in the Sunday-school, the prayer-meeting, even in the privation and patient suffering of your sick-chamber, you may preach the consolations of your religion, and show forth the glory of God your Saviour—"writing your name on the hearts" of all who are within your reach.

Many of us have larger and, therefore, more responsible opportunities. The consecration and amenability of Christian men, in secular life, are identical in principle with the consecration and amenability required of their pastors, and of the missionaries whom they send to the ends of the earth. In calling you into his kingdom on earth, God called you to live, to work, with entire consecration to himself. You must, indeed, provide for your family—and so must the pastor and the missionary; but having done this, your gains should be consecrated to the promotion of his cause, and

every kind of usefulness in the world appertains to his cause, and should be done for his glory. This was the theory of life in the primitive Church, as we have seen; and by it the early Church lived out the Gospel so effulgently, that the splendid and powerful heathenism of the whole Roman world dissolved before it. But how has Christendom fallen from the original faith in this respect! How has the actual standard of Christian life in that age, become but the ideal standard of our age! What does Christendom more need than the restoration of the old standard—the entire consecration of secular life to personal holiness, and personal work for the Church.

Think for a moment what energies, what exhaustless resources, would be developed by such an idea were it once rendered concrete throughout the Christian world. There would be no more lack of laborers; no more lack of money; no more lack of enthusiasm, of heroism. The mouths of gainsayers would be shut; the sanctity and beauty of Christian life would soon preach down triumphantly the infidelity of Christendom. Doubters and scorners would bow before such demonstrations; and the augmented means of the Church would soon overpower the resistance of the heathen world. This is the grand *desideratum*. There is no possibility of exaggeration here. Hyperbole itself becomes literal reality on the theme.

Herein do we see the nobility, the moral heroism, of Christian life, as implied throughout the Scriptures. The mechanic at his bench, the husbandman "speeding his plow," the merchant in the mart—let all these enter into entire consecration, and conduct their labors as purely for Christ as they do their devotions in the Church or the closet, and what a moral dignity would secular life attain among them! How would it be lifted out of its ordinary selfishness! How would it stretch forth its enterprising hands to take hold on high moral achievements and eternal rewards. Secular life would thus become sacerdotal, and we should read, not only in the writings of Peter and John, but in the daily life of Christendom, "Ye are a chosen generation—a *royal priesthood*—a *peculiar* people," and the Church would sing, as the apocalyptic apostle prophetically heard it, "Thou . . . hast redeemed us to God . . . and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and *we shall reign* on the earth."

Not only moral dignity and moral power would be the result of such consecration in ordinary life, but the highest felicity possible on this planet. There is no happiness on earth greater than that of doing good. Self-denial, for this purpose, is, as we have said, the highest self-interest. Wealth, power, honor, these cannot make you happy, except with temporary excitement and illusion; but these, consecrated to good ends, how they become trans-

muted into divine realities, divine gifts, for divine results! A rich man can build a monument of usefulness, in a college, a church, or asylum, by which he may not only perpetuate his name for generations, with a purer fame than that of statesmen or victors, but in which he may live on, when in his grave, a more effective life than ever he had in the flesh, and be thus, age after age, adding to his reward in heaven. Is not this enviable happiness, O wearied man of the mart? Would it not raise thy life out of the sordid selfishness in which money now fails to make thee content? Would it not enhance every other enjoyment that money can afford thee? Would it not console thy declining years and thy dying hours? Make haste, then, to make it thine own. Look around thee for the right opportunity. On thy knees consecrate thy property, and ask, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" Thy Lord will show thee what to do; and, when heart and flesh fail thee, he will say, "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

V.

WEALTH—THE OLD CHARTER-HOUSE.

“**M**ORE than thirty million dollars were given by private individuals for education in the United States during the first half of the last decade.” The estimate seems hardly credible, notwithstanding the continual intimations in our public journals of this kind of liberality. So frequent and munificent have its examples become that foreign travelers among us, and foreign journals, have come to speak of them as a sort of national characteristic; and we may well be proud of the fact. It proves not only that great fortunes, admitting of such liberality, are readily made in our prosperous country, but that our institutions tend to enlightened and patriotic views of the best uses of superabundant wealth.

We doubt not, also, that this unparalleled generosity is prompted by a profound sense of the necessity of powerful educational means for the national welfare. History does not record a case of equal urgency with our own in this respect. Never has humanity, in its march forward, entered a field more magnificent than our national domain; never

has there been a nation of whom it could be affirmed more soberly, in the words of the dying Madame de Stael to George Ticknor, "The future of the world is yours." Men who help to educate and build up this nation are working for all humanity and all ages. It is magnificent work, and we cannot wonder that it takes hold, irresistibly, on the best ambition of large-hearted citizens.

The growth of our population is astonishing, and we speak of it with boastful exultation ; but it involves serious liabilities, demanding gigantic efforts for education. We are proud of our fifty millions of to-day ; but how few of us think soberly of the hundred millions which are to be seen within our limits by most of us now living ; of the still more startling fact, that in our households are thousands of children who will see our population surpass the whole present population of Europe ! What a work has such a nation to do in education ! How can our provisions for this almost incredible increase of souls keep pace with it ? Well may rich patriotic citizens lavish their money on churches, schools, and colleges.

Personally we do not fear this future. We believe there is a divine programme for it, and that programme, involving the best destinies of our race as well as of our country, will be fulfilled. Our institutions, admitting of no serious popular discontent, and our financial resources, admitting of no

exhaustion, should render us competent to meet the emergency, especially with the great personal liberality of citizens for education. Education, mental and moral education, is the true salvation of the Republic. Let her take care of her children and she will thus take care of herself, and not of herself only, but of the best destinies of the civilized world, for that world, according to almost universal acknowledgment, is now coming fast under her beneficent influence. She is sending it bread and gold, and opening comfortable homes for its suffering migrating hosts. When, within the lifetime of thousands of her present children, she shall have, on a national territory more than equal to that of all Europe, a population equal to the present population of all Europe—when, in other words, this one nation shall be about equal to all the rest of the civilized nations put together, what must be her influence upon them? How splendid should be her equipment for such a future—a future not distant, but really startling in its nearness! Behold, then, O American men of wealth, your noble mission. Build up the nation with your benefactions. Dot it all over with intellectual light-houses, that the noble ship of state strike on no rocks. Fill the land with light, that the incoming ignorance and superstition of the emigrating old world may be dispelled like clouds as fast as they reach our shores. The emigrants themselves soon die off,

but their children remain for us ; let us save the children for the nation by education. The Church and the school-house are our best fortifications.

What could we not say on this devotion of private wealth to public interests ! It is, as some one has said, creating a new category of fame, of noble "immortality." Hitherto great reputations, and the monuments consecrated to them, have been comparatively limited to certain classes ; to great authors, great artists, great soldiers, etc. But men of mercantile or financial success have been practically interdicted the circle of the "immortals." This proscription is to give way for a still higher form of renown ; mercantile and financial philanthropists in England, and especially in America, are building monuments of reputation which will surpass those of great soldiers and politicians, if not of great artists and authors. George Peabody's statue, in bronze, on the most conspicuous business place of London, commands as much interest from the passing thousands as that of any other man commemorated in London, not excepting Wellington's. The people bless his memory as they pass it. Fame is not the noblest motive for such men, viewed from the Christian stand-point ; it is, nevertheless, no ignoble one ; if it should not be sought, yet it inevitably follows, and men bless themselves by commemorating their benefactors. The world

will yet come to recognize this kind of reputation as among the best. The names of Astor, Cooper, Lenox, the Stuarts, Senèy, Drew, and not a few other citizens of New York, will live for centuries among their grateful countrymen, in the monuments of learning and philanthropy to which they have consecrated their wealth. Such men, as we have said, live on when they have gone down to their honored graves, and live a more strenuous life than they did in the flesh—forever doing good and adding to the rewards which heaven, as well as earth, awards to the doers of good. What better use can be made of wealth? What better commemoration of a family name than its perpetual association with a public institution of beneficence, a monument teaching a permanent lesson to the public, and commanding the admiration and gratitude, and often the grateful tears, of generations?

But there are probably some reading these lines who will say, They may be relevant enough to rich men, but not to me. I have no means for such achievements. It has been said that the greatest heroes of the race are the unrecorded ones. The capabilities of wealthy Christians are indeed enviable, and where much is given much is required. But the little is also required where little is given. If it fails of record in the world, yet it fails not of record in the universe. Its "record is on high," and that is enough. After all, the salvation

of this nation depends chiefly upon the little contributions with their huge aggregates. The country needs, and will still more need, the liberality of all its people, the poor as well as the rich. And how admirably the provision of God, in his Church, meets this fact! If the poor cannot, individually, do great things for the public good, yet their pittance, given in church collections, for education, missions, etc., take on the form, in her hands, of great aggregates, and become the Archimedean fulcrum and lever by which she moves the moral world. All of us, then, have our opportunities of sharing in the immense work which is devolved upon our country. Not one of us should wish to be exempt from the common responsibility—a responsibility which may be affirmed, with all sobriety, to be the heaviest that ever devolved upon any people. And not one of us need fail of his reward. It is one of the sublimest teachings of Christianity, that whosoever giveth a cup of water in the name of a disciple shall have his reward.

The name of the old “Charter-house School,” London, is familiar to Methodists throughout the world, for Wesley received an important part of his early education there. It is familiar to English readers generally, for some of the most historical men of English politics and literature were its students—Addison; Steele; Blackstone, the juriconsult; the great Greek scholar, Monk, Bishop of

Gloucester; Thirlwall, the historian of Greece; Grote, the still greater Grecist; Thackeray; Lord Liverpool, prime minister; Lord Ellenborough, chief-justice; and almost innumerable others. Few educational institutions of England have been more useful. An old English writer said of Sutton, its founder, that he was "the giver of the greatest gift in England, either in Catholic or Protestant times, ever bestowed by any individual." The Charter-house is a splendid monument of individual charity, and of the utility of wealth rightly used. Its history affords an important lesson which, we think, is not a little relevant to our times, and especially to our country; for the use of wealth for the public good is becoming a noble habit of our age, and needs the lesson of Sutton's example. For nearly three hundred years Thomas Sutton has been in his grave; but he has been living, is now living, and will live on, for ages, in his great benefaction. There is something sublime in this sort of terrestrial immortality, this undying beneficence, won from success of "business life."

Sutton became one of the richest men of his time, chiefly by his mercantile enterprise, and the skillful development of coal mines discovered on his country estate. Like all truly elevated souls, whether in mercantile or other spheres of life, he knew that property, beyond a certain limit—beyond *enough* for the real interests of existence—

could only be a burden; and especially to a conscientious man, a burden of responsibility. He resolved, therefore, to make some signal use of his wealth; he proposed to purchase the old Carthusian Monastery, (now the Charter-house,) and consecrate it forever to two of the best possible purposes; first, as a home, or hospital, for poor old men; and, second, as a school for poor scholars. The scholars were limited, not to the poorest boys, but to those "whose parents have no estate, in lands, to leave them; the children of poor men that want means to bring them up." Hence such youth as we have mentioned, of very respectable, but not wealthy, families, have been prepared for eminence there. The men, or "poor brethren," sheltered there were eighty in number, "some being maimed in the wars, some undone by shipwreck and misfortune." And thus, for generations, a numerous school for boys, and a happy home for eighty worthy old men, have been maintained by the good Sutton's thoughtful liberality.

But the particular lesson with which we wish to point this sketch, remains to be noticed. Sutton came near risking his project by at first designing it to be a posthumous affair—a common error of rich philanthropists. How many millions have in this manner been lost to the cause of charity! How many noble and otherwise successful lives have thus terminated in defeat through

the wrangling of unscrupulous heirs, and the expenses of equally unscrupulous lawyers! A good angel was, however, at hand to save the good man's design. He had made his will, providing for its prosecution by his executors. Hall, Bishop of Exeter, was his personal friend; and England may be said to owe this magnificent charity to the Christian good sense of the Bishop. Hall, after pondering the matter, wrote to Sutton a characteristic letter: "I ask leave," he said, "to hasten your pace a little, and to excite your Christian forwardness to begin speedily what you have long and constantly vowed. You would not but do good; why not now? I speak boldly; the more speed, the more comfort; neither are the times at our disposal, nor ourselves. How many have meant well and done nothing, and lost the crown with lingering! Say not, To-morrow I will give, if thou now have it, for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth. It hath been an old rule of liberality, 'He gives twice who gives quickly;' whereas slow benefits argue uncheerfulness and lose their worth. Who lingers his receipts is condemned as unthrifty; He who knoweth both hath said, 'It is better to give than to receive.' If we are of the same spirit, why are we hasty in the worst and slack in the better? Suffer yourself, therefore, good sir, for God's sake, for the Gospel's sake, for the Church's sake, for your soul's sake, to be stirred up by these

few lines to a resolute and speedy performing of your worthy intentions."

Sutton was too practical a business man not to perceive the wisdom of these counsels, and too good a Christian not to feel the force of the Bishop's pious exhortation. He at once made up his mind to begin his generous work, and he was not a day too soon with it. He lived to see it organized; but hardly was he in his grave before his next of kin, for whom he had provided in his will, attacked the scheme. But he had purchased the Charter-house, and had prosecuted his plan far enough to enable Chief-justice Coke to save it in the court. Had he left his fortune as a posthumous charity, we might never have heard of the illustrious Charter-house School. To-day there are five hundred youth in it, and eighty "poor brethren;" they worship daily in their own chapel on the premises, and they bless, upon their knees, the memory of their benefactor, whose happiness in his heavenly place may be heightened by their gratitude. Lord Ellenborough, Chief-justice of England, was so thankful for his education there, as a "poor scholar," that, when one of the foremost men of England, he requested, in his will, that his remains might be buried by the side of the good merchant in the chapel of the school; and there they rest, honored by, and honoring, the famous institution. At the celebration of the "Founder's Day," annually, the assembled

hundreds, who rejoice in his charity, utter, in the old chapel, a loud "Amen" to the lesson of the occasion, the Thirty-seventh Psalm: "The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord: and he delighteth in his way. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand. I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread."

It is thus that generous souls can convert wealth, so often ruinous to its gainers and their families, into a magnificent instrumentality of beneficence for indefinite ages. It is thus that the rich man, so often accursed in himself and a curse to others, may array himself among the best benefactors of his race. Wealth is enviable when thus consecrated. In most other and higher pursuits—of literature, art, statesmanship, war—men are actuated by motives of distinction. They are willing to sacrifice nearly every thing else for public recognition or fame. But the talent for money-making may, especially in our day, take rank, as we have seen, by the side of genius itself in this respect. What fame, what immortality on earth, can be nobler than that which attaches to a permanent foundation of beneficence? What can be more useful? How can a man more nobly live on among his fellows, when he is buried out of their sight, than in such an institution as that which renders familiar

and dear to every Englishman to-day the honored name of Sutton? Such a fact is worth volumes of mere dissertation on the use of money; but its lesson, against posthumous charity, is one of its most important aspects. What thy hand findeth to do, in this respect, do it *now*, and do it with thy might. Risk not thy noblest designs, and the virtue and the peace of thy kindred, by exposing thy property to the disputations and tergiversations of courts. Build thine own monument, as thou hast built thine own fortune, and go to the repose of thy grave assured that thou shalt never die in the hearts of thy countrymen. God hath given thee success in the labor of thy life for such noble ends. Thou "shalt not die, but live," perhaps more productively than ever in such posthumous usefulness. Thou canst thus "make to thyself friends of the mammon of unrighteousness," and in heaven look down upon the continued, beneficent results of thy life and rejoice therein; for, though "justified by faith alone," thou shalt be "judged by thy works." It is only when we come to such views and uses of life that we understand its real significance. Life is activity; without this we do not live; we sleep, or, at most, but dream; and "the soul is dead that slumbers." The highest law of activity is that it be beneficent; for this, rightly considered, presupposes that it be pure in its motives and procedure. To a really beneficent life there is no dullness, no

ennui. He who spends his life in doing good is sure to enjoy life ; and (blessed paradox !) life, thus enjoyed, is resigned, at death, also with joy. Such is the prerogative of virtue. The general discontent with life even among the most successful ; the incessant wail over what is called the “mystery of life,” is at best an abject confession of the selfishness and baseness of ordinary life. It is the ever-recurring refrain of our modern literature—our novels, poetry, and of even our philosophy. None feel it more than the selfishly wealthy. The ability to make money may be a God-given talent ; used beneficently it may make life felicitous and death not less so. “Understandest thou what thou readest ?”

VI.

THE CHRISTIAN THEORY OF LIFE.

THAT is a striking little narrative recorded in the military life of David after his victory over the Amalekites, (1 Sam. xxx, 24, 25,) little in the brevity of its record, but not small in the significance of its lesson; for it involves a principle of large application to the Christian life. The victorious troops were unwilling that their brethren who had not been in the battle, but had guarded the common "stuff" at a distance, should share in the spoils. David promptly rebuked them, and established forever a magnanimous rule for such cases: "Who will hearken unto you," he said, "in this matter? but as his part is that goeth down to the battle, so shall his part be that tarrieth by the stuff: they shall part alike. And it was so from that day forward, that he made it a statute and an ordinance for Israel unto this day."

Milton says that even those who "only stand and wait" do "also serve." There are circumstances in which to *endure*, in an exemplary way, may be the most effective service; and many a patient, loving sufferer has preached the highest truths of Christianity most effectively by exempli-

fying its highest virtues. Many a martyr has done more for the truth in a single, heroic, dying hour than he could have done in the largest life of religious activity.

The true theory of Christian life is, doubtless, the entire consecration of *all ordinary* as well as extraordinary life to the kingdom of God in the world. Augustine's idea of the City of God is the right one; not, indeed, as the pontifical State of Rome interpreted and applied it, instituting a theocracy which was but an ecclesiastical despotism—a State ruled by priests, and domineering over the consciences and temporalities of men; maintaining its diplomacy in foreign courts, and arraying its troops in fields of battle. Assuredly the Gospel never suggests such a theory of Christian domination. But it does teach a Kingdom—a reign of Christ over his own consecrated subjects, a spiritual society, a divine commonwealth amid the dominions of earth, into which every regenerated soul is incorporated; in which he becomes a citizen. “Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God.”

Without further discussing the doctrine of Luther, Calvin, and the other Reformers, on what they called “the priesthood of the people,” and the parity of all saints in the kingdom of God on earth, we state but a *prima-facie* truth of Scripture in

saying that the consecration of secular life to the ends of the spiritual society, to the rule of Christ on earth, is the fundamental idea of that society. A man, in becoming a Christian, comes, as we have insisted, out from the world ; though he must still remain upon it, he is no longer of it. He has discovered and entered a blessed spiritual world upon this planet ; a kingdom whose sovereign is the “ King eternal, immortal, invisible,” and henceforth his supreme allegiance is to him. Whether he be called to preach or teach, or to follow the plow or strike the anvil, to go forth, like the victors of David, into the battle-fields of the moral world, or to guard the “ stuff ” at home, he is wholly the Lord’s ; all his time, all his gifts, all his being, belong to the Lord his sovereign. Consecration, *entire* consecration is the characteristic of his new citizenship. In proportion as he fails in this he comes short of the evangelical theory of life. Is his gift a talent for money-making ? It should be as thoroughly consecrated to the interests of the kingdom of God as his pastor’s gift of speech is. He is not his own ; he has been “ purchased with a price.” The principle of his amenability—that upon which he will be judged in the last day—is, as we have shown, identical with that upon which his pastor will then stand or fall. Apart from the biblical duty of providing for their families, the life of each should be devoted to the common interests of their common

cause. Of course, in the details of method, etc., a Christian secular life must vary from a purely ministerial or missionary one; but we insist upon this fact of their identical consecration, and their identical amenability. And we insist that thus the original Church understood the theory of evangelical life, and it was thus that it "turned the world upside down," and subdued the heathenism of the Roman Empire.

It is only in this manner that they who guard the "stuff" can be entitled to share the final spoils, the eternal rewards. A merchant or mechanic pursuing his secular toil, in order, after supporting his family, to promote the kingdom of God on earth, by the consecration of his gains, may thus be represented in the person of a missionary in the heart of India or China, and will share his reward in heaven. He is virtually in the battle, though he is taking care of the "stuff" at home. He will rightfully fall into the mighty column of victors, which at last shall gather from the east and the west, the north and the south, and march with their trophies through the gates into the city amid the acclamations of angels.

VII.

A TEXT FROM GOETHE—AIM IN LIFE.

POPULAR evangelical propagandism was, then, one of the characteristic ideas of apostolic Christianity; and one of the evident needs of modern Christianity is the fuller restoration of the primitive spirit of labor.

Virtue, in the old, classic sense of the word, meant energy or force. Christian zeal was in that age genuine force; it was more a force than a talent; it was common to all believers, whether they had any special talent or not. Emerson says, "There is always room for a man of force, and he makes room for many." Be zealous, be resolute for the truth, even if you cannot be eloquent for it. The genius of war is with the great commanders, not with the common troops; but there is no victory without the energy of the common troops.

We must work for others if we would save ourselves. An old Chinese maxim says, "He who wishes to secure the good of others has already secured his own." If a barbaric heathenism taught such an idea, how much more does Christianity emphasize it! Christianity, whose Founder offered himself a sacrifice for the world, and, as such, a

model for his Church for evermore! The Hebrew "Preacher" says, "He hath made every thing beautiful in his time . . . I know that there is no good in them, but for a man to rejoice, and to do good in his life."

Had the primitive, the apostolic, idea of individual devotion to the good of others been maintained, we can hardly doubt that the predicted universal triumph of the Gospel would long ago have been realized. God works by means; it would be ruinous to us were he to forego these means and supersede our co-operation with him. That co-operation is the means of our development unto ever higher character. The idea of self-sacrifice, of labor for others, if once made a fixed and universal idea, would be omnipotent in the development of life, energy, and victory in the Church, and in individual Christian life as well. "A great fixed idea," says Taine, "is like the iron rod which sculptors put in statues. It impales and sustains." Strength of soul, like strength of body, comes largely of the invigoration which labor imparts. A working Church can hardly fail to be a devoted one in all other respects; good works are the best proofs of saving faith. Set a Church to hard work if you would save it from internal quarrels; make it diligent in labor if you would have it sound in doctrine. Since the era of missions and of Sunday-school work, there has been a constantly growing sentiment of catholicity in the

Protestant world; a gradual but constant decline of sectarian repugnancies and bigotry. Work has a mighty logic in it to dispel theoretical fallacies. If the Church goes on increasing in practical zeal, it will not be wonderful should it at last find itself arrived, hardly knowing how, at a common position of complete communion, if not of unification. Inward holiness developing itself in outward labors; self-consecration to God, showing itself in self-sacrifice for man; these are the secrets of a prosperous Church and of the final victory of Christianity in the world.

Every man of God should lay out his life for such work; should plan for it, and bend all the capabilities of his life toward it. "The greater part of all the mischief of the world," says Goethe, "comes from the fact that men do not sufficiently understand their own aims." Perhaps he should have said that it comes from the lack of any distinct or adequate aims whatever. Except to provide the mere means of living—money—most men have no aim of life. Hence so many fall into the fallacy of entirely exaggerating the means of living, and, after obtaining sufficient wealth, still go on seeking more and more, as if money were an end, not a mere means. A most morbid delusion! Give aim to your whole life if you would have a real, a productive, a noble life. And remember that no aim can be more ennobling, and more felicitous, than labor and self-sacrifice for the good of others. If

you have a talent for money-making, thank God for it, and apply yourself to use it thoroughly for the good of the world. If you do so, the world will soon have something of heaven in it for you. A sort of joyousness is inherent in benevolence. God has wedded the two, that they may bless one another.

Do not evade this duty, this blessedness, by arguing with yourself that you have no talent for any important usefulness. The ambition to do only signal things may be the veriest pride of the depraved heart. If you have only small talents—even the one talent of the parable—use it with your might; remember it is all your divine Master will hold you accountable for; but remember, also, that it was the man who, in the parable, neglected his one talent, that was lost in the day of reckoning. That one talent of yours, if used aright, may place you as high in heaven as any monarch who may go thither from an earthly throne. Thoughtful men are continually inquiring after the secret of a happy life. Most writers look upon life as a mystery of evil and sorrow. There is but one secret of happiness on earth; to the devout reader of the Scriptures it is an “open secret;” it is, we repeat, self-consecration to God and self-sacrifice for man.

The apostle’s admonition, that he who would “not work, neither should he eat,” had a particular application; but it admits of an important generalization. It includes a principle of universal appli-

cation—a principle really grand in itself. Work is the law of this part of God's universe, and we may reasonably suppose, of all other parts of it. We cannot conceive of an idle archangel; and we know that the law of growth and of happiness for intelligent beings in this world is labor every-where and evermore. Intellectual and moral life necessarily imply activity; the cessation of activity implies the cessation of spiritual being. Nature is almost infinitely potential, but man alone, under God, is potent to develop her potential resources. Her imperfection in this respect, therefore, renders man's agency her own necessary complement. And here, as we have seen, is her real perfection—her suitability for God's design, as the theater of man's activity, and of his consequent development.

Work, O man, work while the day lasteth! The ancient painter said that he painted for eternity. The humblest worker in this world is working for eternity, whether he thinketh of it or not. There is something grand in the heroism of the great worker. No mind but that of God can tell the full result of his agency in the universe. It may go on, in its unforeseen consequences, forever and forever. Good men, martyred ages ago for their good works on the earth, are still extant, leading on the human race. *Omnia vincit labor*: "Labor conquers all things." St. Paul was never more alive and powerful on the earth than he is at this hour. Galileo, Newton,

Bacon, are still living an ever-widening life. Luther, Calvin, and Wesley, have only begun their lives. Death has not power over them; they still live and labor in the spirit among men, are still exerting an influence upon the interests of the world.

But these are great examples; let them not discourage humble workers. Do what thy hand findeth to do, and thou shalt do well; and the divine Master will see that thy labor shall not be in vain. If you turn one soul to righteousness you shall achieve a greater deed than the creation of a world, than the creation of a material universe. You, the anxious mother, training your little household flock, may be preparing a choir for heaven. You, the plodding, ill-paid school-teacher, may be preparing constellations for the eternal skies. You, the village pastor, may be leading up a circle to encompass the throne of God. You, the sufferer, laid, apparently, aside from all activity to languish on a sick-bed, even you may be ministering, by patient endurance, the highest lessons to all around you. And you who know not what to do, who sometimes think that God has not found you to be worthy or fitted for any good activity, even you may bear in mind Milton's wise saying: "They also serve who only stand and wait."

The humblest lot in life may thus be consecrated. Every life should have *an aim*, and it should be as high as heaven.

VIII.

YOUR VOCATION—EXAMPLES.

THE Roman Church teaches that Christians generally have a personal “vocation,” and that they should scrupulously seek to ascertain and devote their lives to it. Some are called to the “priesthood,” some to teaching, some to the “lay brotherhoods,” the monasteries and nunneries, but most to ordinary life; yet all are “called” to serve the Church in whatever sphere.

Protestantism copies this example of the Latin Church in respect to *official* vocation—the “call to the ministry,” etc.—but is quite vague in respect to any “vocation” of its unofficial membership. The doctrine of the Latin Church on the subject is nevertheless true, though it is wrongly applied. By it that Church has gathered around its regular or clerical ministry an immense ministry of laymen and of women, though it has disastrously erred by organizing them into “religious orders,” and gathering them in monasteries, nunneries, and ecclesiastical seminaries. Still we see the power of its teaching on the subject—its lay ministry, if we may so call it, is vastly larger throughout the world than its regular ministry or priesthood, and, per-

haps, two thirds of its real work is done by the former. It finds a place for every kind of talent and uses it to the utmost. Protestantism should use, but not abuse, the same principle. How boundless are our resources of lay talent and zeal! And all we need, in order to bring them out for the speedy regeneration of the world, is, not the organic system of Romanism, but the better recognition of the principle of lay consecration to Christian work—the principle upon which the Latin Church has acted, and which is one of the few apostolic principles which it has retained amid its many corruptions of original Christianity. We should *Protestantize* the principle; were we to do so throughout Christendom it would not be long before we could evangelize the world.

There is a striking example of Protestant application of this principle in the story of the Scotch layman, Haldane, who, believing he had a vocation to restore orthodoxy in Geneva, where Rationalism had superseded the evangelism of the Reformation, began humbly there his work by reading and talking over his Bible in private rooms to such hearers as he could induce to visit him of evenings, and thus led Malan, Merle d'Aubigné, Frédéric Monod, Gaussen, Rieu, and many others, back to the primitive faith; produced the "*evangelique*" movement which has ever since been working in France as well as Switzerland—with its theological seminary,

its numerous schemes of Christian benevolence and propagandism, its evangelical literature crowned by the works of Gaussen, the Gasparins, and, above all, by the "History of the Reformation," by Merle d'Aubigné.

The case of Haldane is, indeed, an extraordinary one; another so fruitful in results might not readily be found; but, in principle, it is identical with the "vocation" of every genuine disciple of Christ. Every such one should urgently ask, "What wilt thou have me to do?" and never be content till he finds his appropriate work for the Church, however humble it may be. God can make a grand work of it for time and eternity, however hopeless it may seem in the outset. None could have been more humble, or more apparently hopeless, than that which Haldane attempted amid the moral death of Geneva; but how imposingly historical has it become!

Much has been said, in these pages, on the general subject; but some more practical hints may be expedient, for, doubtless, in these days of increased lay labor, hundreds of devout souls wait for direction, wishing to see their way clear for a more effective life work than they have yet attained; and it is not unimportant, too, amid the excitements of our times, that we guard well against that tendency which a generous and heroic enthusiasm always has to degenerate into fanaticism.

We have two emphatic counsels to give on the subject. First, wait not for strong inward suggestions or impulses to determine your “vocation.”

The divine Spirit will inspire you, but it is not now its ordinary function to make new *revelations* to us, whether about doctrine or duty. It will warm your heart and enlighten your eyes to see occasions of duty as they are revealed in the ordering of divine Providence, but it will not supersede the written word and the human understanding. In the “Life and Times of Rev. Dr. Nathan Bangs” is recorded a striking warning against trusting to *impressions*. When he traveled in Canada, as one of the founders of Methodism there, he was making his way with great difficulty through the snow to one of his preaching appointments, and saw, some distance from the highway, a solitary house almost buried in the snow. Sermons were few and far between, in those days, in that borean country, and the itinerant evangelists used to stop at the isolated habitations to pray with and exhort their families. Dr. Bangs *felt*, as he saw this house, that he ought not to pass it without delivering his message. It was important that he should hasten on his course to his appointment; his jaded horse as well as himself suffered under the pelting storm; the passage from the highway to the house was obliterated and would be laborious through the drifts; yet he could not get rid of his “impression.”

He attempted to reason it down; he passed the house, and was resolute to go on, but the impression deepened momentarily; it seemed an inspiration; it admonished him that he was evading his duty, and that souls in the neglected habitation might be lost through his faithlessness. He had passed it some distance when he could no longer resist the inward impulse; turning his horse back he made his way through the almost impassable snow toward the building; he shouted to its inmates to open, but none appeared; he got nearer, and, after straining his lungs in the wintry air to call them out, he dismounted, and, opening a window, saw that it was a deserted house; the only hearers for him there were fasting rats. The veteran evangelist records that this incident taught him a valuable lesson—never to follow inward impulses that could not be clearly justified by his common sense. Do not, then, wait to be “moved” to any given course of usefulness. Distrust every thing of the kind, or you may become the victim of self-delusion; and may cut off your own usefulness by becoming intolerably obtrusive to those to whom you would be useful.

A second counsel is, that if you would work effectually for the Church, begin just *where you are*. Seize on the most immediate opportunities; make the best of these, and God will lead you on to further and higher ones. The best example, perhaps,

that you could read for guidance and encouragement would be "A Memoir of William Carvosso," famous as the lay apostle of Cornwall. We refer to him because he was one of the humblest lay laborers, and yet did great and glorious work. The son of a sailor, he was an obscure, illiterate fisherman. He would fish by day and hold meetings by night; first in a small room in a fisher's hut, then in a fish-drying cellar, then in a large upper room, "so frail that it fell, a heap of ruins, on the assembly." But his converts multiplied, and they built a spacious chapel. "The whole place was transformed." He removed, and began again in his new neighborhood. Soon he had three flourishing societies. He now had calls in every direction. At Cambuslang, a small town, he went praying, singing, and exhorting from house to house through the day, and holding meetings at night; more than seven hundred souls were converted. Carvosso became the evangelist of Cornwall. For sixty years he kept much of the country astir with his simple labors. When sixty-five years old the letter "P," marking on a record the presence of his people at class-meetings, was all he could write. He then mastered the art of writing as a means of doing further good. "Comment," says an American clergyman, writing out these facts, "is unnecessary." Entirely so; the life and usefulness of this faithful man show precisely the lesson you need. Begin where you are; do the work at hand; conse-

crate it with prayer, and follow on in the openings of Providence. The one great thing is to *begin*; and this is precisely the way to begin. Begin, and God alone can tell where your work will end. It may be in the pulpit, or in the mission field at the ends of the world, or around your present home; but one thing be sure of, it will end at the gate of heaven, amid the acclamations of souls saved forever by your help.

IX.

THE LITTLE TALENTS.

WHAT a sizable book could be written on the importance of *little* things—the little talents, the little opportunities of life.

The little in life, as in nature, it must be borne in mind, is only relatively such. Faraday said that there is, potentially, electrical force enough in some things, hardly larger than a drop of water, to shatter mountains. Physicists assure us, with mathematical evidence, that the loss of a cubic inch of matter would, sooner or later, destroy the equilibrium of the solar system, and involve it in ruin. Therefore, nature has provided for the conservation of every particle, nothing being ever annihilated, however often changed in form. In fine, the great things in nature are but the aggregation of small things, and material science comes, in the last analysis, to atomic elements as the constituents of all things.

So it is in life. Life is made up mostly of small facts: our years of minutes; our physical being of pulsations; our mental existence of successive thoughts and feelings. Every-day duties make up our great moral accountability; fleeting opportuni-

ties our fate for both worlds; ordinary talents the working energies of the race. The great men, so-called, (for we are all inestimably great, in a right view,) the great talents, are anomalies provided for special needs of humanity, but the normal, working, steady, and aggregately most effective, resources of the world, are its ordinary means, the so-called little things.

What a grand lesson the subject suggests in regard to our moral or religious life! Our Lord recognized it in the parable of the talents—the completest piece of didactic discourse ever given to the world. It gives the whole moral theory of life. It teaches that every man has some talents, larger or smaller. It illustrates the variety of talents. There is the man of superiority, who had the five talents; the man of mediocrity, who had two; the man of inferiority, who had one. But all are held strictly amenable; all are to appear before the same tribunal at last, and to be tried by the same ethical standard. There is no evasion of that accountability, on the ground of our small abilities or small opportunities, for the reason that there are none that are intrinsically small—being only relatively such. There is no opportunity, no talent, however apparently little, that has not been purchased for us by the infinite merit of our Redeemer; that may not have eternal consequences; that may not, like a single grain of corn, be capable of repro-

ducing itself in a thousand, in ten thousand, in infinitely numerous, results.

Have we never been struck by the most startling phase of that great parable, namely, that it was not the superior man, nor the mediocre man, but precisely the inferior one, who was lost? He is the most conspicuous character in the dramatic description, the subject of its tragic *dénouement*. It was he who thought his endowments too insignificant to be of any use; whose false modesty, or "voluntary humility," led him to hide it away in a napkin; and who supposed he would escape, by his very insignificance, the final *account*, that was held to the most rigorous account, and was cast away into "outer darkness." There is, indeed, a startling significance in this feature of the discourse. Pascal says, "Do little things as if they were great, because of the majesty of Christ who dwells in thee; and do great things as if they were little and easy, because of his omnipotence."

Let us beware, then, how we treat the *small* talents of the Church. Let no individual Church, which may seem to be without resources, without talents, "despise the day of small things." Let it remind itself that every soul belonging to it, however humble, is an impersonation of some talent, some capacity for usefulness in some way or other; and that such small talents, consecrated, well-combined, and directed by a faithful pastor, can make

the poorest Church a fortress of moral power, against which "the gates of hell shall not prevail." Nay, it may itself "shake the trembling gates of hell."

The greatest practical problem of the pastoral office, probably, is to know how to get all the small talents of a Church into activity. Exceptional or superior talent, in individual laymen, is readily discernible, and it is expedient always to give it recognition in the Church by assigning it appropriate labors. It is a precious gift of God; and many a single-talented layman—talented in speech or in finance—has borne up a whole Church on his shoulders. But there are many struggling societies which have no such individual advantage, and yet the aggregate of their small talents, if rightly combined and applied, might be immeasurably more effective than special talent in one or in a score of individuals. Even when a Church may be well equipped with talented laymen for its official or special work, how incomparably greater would be its moral power if all its smaller resources could be evoked into action; if all the hidden places of its buried single talents could be dug out, the napkins torn off and scattered to the winds, and the scores, the hundreds, the thousands, it may be, of its resources, disinterred, could be brought around its altar for consecration to the common good!

But while the lesson is important for the Church, how much more applicable is it to individual Chris

tians! Man of God, if thou hast but one talent, where is it? Is it hid away in a napkin? Is it buried? Remember that the final judgment will ferret it out. Canst thou not speak for thy Master? Canst thou not go from house to house, among thy neighbors, in his name, teach his little ones in a Sunday-school, testify for him in a prayer-meeting, give a pittance of thy earnings for him? Remember him in the parable that buried his talent, and beware of his fate!

Why "stand ye all the day idle?" Begin something good, though it be small. The mightiest oak in the forest grew from a small acorn. Two grains of wheat would suffice, with proper care and labor, to cover, in time, all the grain-bearing soil of this planet, and, transferred to other orbs, could cover in like manner all the worlds of the heavens. Despise not the day of small things. Thou art but a small soul if thou doest so. But if thou hast hitherto been such, God's grace can, nevertheless, make thee a strong one. Meanwhile remember that God works by means, and the normal means, in this case, is activity. Grace itself is a divine force, imparted to the soul, first, for its own moral life; and, secondly, for the expansion and invigoration of that life by exercise in good work. Strengthen, then, the feeble knees, lift up the flagging arms, sigh no more over the incompetence, the meagerness, of thy life. Put away forever the old,

paltry logic about the problem of life. To a scriptural Christian life is an intelligible reality, a sublime probation, full of significance, because full of beneficent opportunities. Wouldest thou have a joyous life? Wouldest thou feel that with thee life grows, and becomes more radiant, day by day, that *ennui* and dejection flee, like reptiles, from thy presence? Plunge into useful work; relieve the sufferings of others if thou wouldest have thine own mitigated. "Learn to *labor*, learn to *wait*," says the poet. Yes, wait, but not for the opportunity, only for the reward. The opportunity is now ours, and that is all that concerns us. The *reward*—what of that? The greatest of the workers of the apostolic age has told us: "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."

X.

THE ELEVENTH COMMANDMENT—MANNERS.

WITH most of us manners are a chief ministry of life. If love is the very element, the essence of holiness, then holiness should produce sweetness of both mind and manners. Amiability means, etymologically, loveliness, loveableness. But is it not too often the misfortune of piety, especially in its more earnest forms, to be accompanied by unamiable severity, not to say sourness—by introspective moodiness; unnecessary rigor in petty or indifferent things; uncharitable crimination of those whose opinions of spiritual experience do not conform to our own, habitual obtrusion of our own opinions—not only repelling individual brethren, but sometimes annoying and agitating whole Churches?

“Be courteous:” The sentence, though brief, is full of significance, and is divinely authoritative. It is a commandment.

Stanley, in his “Lectures on the Scotch Church,” tells a fine story about Archbishop Usher, the chronologist of sacred history. Hearing of the great genius and saintliness of Rutherford, the celebrated

Scotch divine, he went *incognito* to the rural parsonage of the good pastor, and was received to its hospitality as a belated traveler. The household was "catechised" that evening, and the stranger took his seat among them to share the exercise. "How many commandments are there?" asked Rutherford. "Eleven," replied Usher. Rutherford rebuked him severely for his ignorance. What had been his education, that he could make such a blunder? The next morning was Sunday, and, as the pastor went on his way through the woods, toward his church, he heard fervent prayer in a thicket, and was deeply affected. Usher soon appeared coming out of it, and Rutherford had an explanation. His heart was still more deeply touched, and the Archbishop was constrained to preach for him that morning. He did so on the text, "A new commandment," etc. Rutherford was now still more deeply affected; there was, indeed, an eleventh commandment—"that ye love one another"—and he had unintentionally broken it, for he had not been courteous to his eminent visitor in his Saturday evening catechetical rebuke, and the command to be courteous was certainly implied in the new commandment—if not, it must be a twelfth one.

It is, indeed, a "commandment," whether the eleventh modified, or a twelfth. Hannah More, in her Essay on St. Paul, delineates him as a veritable gentleman. He knew how to rebuke audacious

sin; but his writings teem with maxims inculcating gentle behavior. There was a fine touch of courtesy in his retraction of that sudden rebuke to the Jewish priest—of courteous respect for the office, if not the officer.

Manners are admitted to be, at least, “minor morals.” *Minor* morals! How often are they indeed major morals! As making up a great proportion of the habitual conduct of life, their influence on ourselves, as well as on others, is habitual, and, therefore, must be proportionately strong and important. Shall we, then, deem them mere minor morals? Do they not fashion us, to a great extent, for both worlds? “As a man thinketh, so is he,” is an old proverb; as a man acteth, so is he, may be more surely affirmed, especially as he acteth habitually, in the common intercourse of life, so thoroughly modified by our demeanor.

You “know a man by the company he keeps,” says another maxim; you know him still more by the habitudes which accompany him.

You know him by his manners, not merely because manners are the most habitual effect, or expression, of his character, but because they have really, to a great extent, formed his character. They are cause as well as effect.

There is, then, a profound ethical importance in manners, for their educational, their moral, effect on the man himself. A truly courteous man, a true

gentleman, and especially a Christian gentleman, is the better for every act of good manners in his daily life. There is sentiment, and, in a sense, moral sentiment, at the bottom of all manners. Respect for others has some very subtle and vital affinity with self-respect; and self-respect is not self-conceit, it is respect for the moral claims of our own nature on our own conduct.

Courtesy is, then, we repeat, ethical—and much more deeply and broadly so than is usually supposed. We cannot habitually violate its requisitions without injuring ourselves, as well as others. Discourtesy reacts and degenerates.

But manners are not only important as self-educational; they are powerful in their influence on others, and have, in this respect, an ethical importance: to them attaches an unavoidable responsibility.

Our children are more effectively educated at home than in the school or in the world. The daily, insinuating influence of a mother's voice, or glance, on the *morale* of her child, is like the gentle air and sunlight to young plants. The roughness or gentleness of a father's demeanor in the household may make "roughs" or gentlemen of his boys. Mutual petulance or affectionateness between the children of a family may depend almost entirely on the same qualities in the father and mother. There is scarcely any thing, however apparently trivial, in

the manners of the home that is not irresistibly educational. The ladder heavenward, visioned in the mind of the patriarch, is planted at the domestic hearth, and inclines over the very cradle. Are manners *minor* morals, then? Nay, they are the most effective education, they form one of the most potent influences of the common, human life. There are cases in which defective manners inflict an evil equivalent to certain more apparent violations of morality.

Manners are the physiognomy of the soul. Rudeness, and especially ill-tempered severity, show an inferior *morale*. The personal revelation of character, particularly in familiar life, is one of the most influential forces for good or ill that acts upon men. It is in life what it is in literature, only incomparably more influential, as it is more habitual and affects our more direct and more sacred relations and intercourse. We know that in literature it is the great, the distinctive, power of an author. It is the individuality, the intellectual and moral personality of a writer, that mostly makes his productions classical or otherwise. Milton, Shakespeare, Goethe, Schiller, Byron, we read themselves in their style of both language and thought; and they thus mold the souls of their readers after their own image. Pascal says, that "When we see a natural style we are surprised and delighted, for, in expecting to see an author, we find a man; while those who have

good taste, often, in opening a book, expecting to see a man, find only an author." "Style is the man," says another great French writer. And so manners are the man—the style of the man's conduct, and immeasurable in their silent, unconscious influence on all around us. Not only do parents thus mold the hearts and lives of their children, children the hearts and lives of one another, but pastors thus act on their Churches, neighbors on neighbors, and even nations on nations. "Be courteous," is, then, we may repeat, an important moral law—a divine commandment.

It is a fallacy to suppose that manners are matters merely of social life; they belong to a man's whole life—his public as well as his private life. They have infinitely more to do with the success of public men than is usually supposed. They affect especially and profoundly the pastoral character and success. It is a great thing to be a true evangelist; but can you be completely so without obedience to the injunction of one who was more than an evangelist, who was an apostle—"Be courteous?" A public man who outrages good manners may not be altogether a moral nuisance, but he cannot well be a salutary moral power in the community. His best theoretical instruction, if he be a public teacher, may not compensate for the continuous, insidious, demoralizing influence of his manners on his habitual hearers,

especially on the incipient character of children and youth. The public teacher should, above all things, be, as Cicero insisted in regard to the orator, a good man; but, next to this, he should be a genuine gentleman. This phrase ordinarily has a somewhat ambiguous application: we need not say that we are not using it in its equivocal, conventional sense. We use it in the sense of the apostle's command—"Be courteous,"—maintain your manners, he would say. Gentleness, so incessantly enjoined in holy Scripture, is an equivalent phrase—because genuine politeness itself always includes, as its central element, gentleness, (gentility,) kindliness; that is to say, a certain moral sentiment of tenderness and good-will toward all men. It is a fact, worthy of the attention of the ethical philosopher, that true manners, genuine politeness, in not only polished life, but even in the chivalry of the age of knight-hood, has thus been identified with a certain moral sentiment; that "gentility" essentially means gentleness; that even the chivalry, the bravery, of the hero, has proverbially been associated with generosity. How can a public man, then, dispense with these qualities? There is not merely a conciliatory influence in good manners on the part of the public man—an influence to win a candid hearing—but there is a positive moral power in them, a power which enhances all other power. Who has not observed how differently is received and felt the utter-

ance of the same truth by a man of genuine courtesy on the one hand, and a man of reckless manners on the other? How often have we seen the storm, raised by a violent or insolent disputant, allayed and turned into a favoring gale for a good cause, by a man of courteous speech, a man whose self-respect has made him respectful to his antagonists, and whose "soft answer turneth away wrath." "Be courteous," then, if you would be effective; be always and every-where the true Christian gentleman, and men will not fail to recognize in your manners an authority for your opinions. Your people will feel it; your children, your neighbors, will feel it; where your words might be powerless your manners may be omnipotent.

Let us not misunderstand the word. It is courtesy, not merely the manner or appearance of courtesy, that is enjoined. What may be manners in one country or age may not be such in another. Courtesy is the same every-where and always. Courtesy, as meant by the apostle, and instinctively recognized by refined minds, is not so much manners, as it is the underlying sentiment of manners. And manners themselves should be distinguished from mannerisms. Mannerism is sometimes a mere perversion, a caricature of manners. The highest courtesy is often seen in the avoidance of manners—in the intercourse of true gentlemen, who have so much hearty regard for one another, so

much confidence in their mutual good understanding, that they spontaneously dispense with all mere *forms* of courtesy. Courtesy is thus supreme in its spirit, while unconcerned about its expression. It is a sort of compliment to an intimate friend for you to show that you so far confide in his courtesy as to believe that he expects not the forms of courtesy from you. Lovers are never fastidious about the etiquette of manners. The etiquette of manners seldom enters into the most holy sanctuaries or intimacies of life. It is left outside, as in the East the sandals are left at the door; but courtesy always enters, and is most at home in the homes of the heart.

Great was Paul as a theologian, all the world acknowledges; but he was equally great as an ethical philosopher. What a fine discernment of moral distinctions he had! Love was with him the “fulfilling of the law,” and love is, in his writings, the essential principle of courtesy—gentleness, kindness, sweetness of soul. When were ever better ethics given to the world than in his discourse to the Corinthians on charity? That discourse should certainly rank next to his divine Master’s Sermon on the Mount, the second great religious document in the possession of the world. Any candid skeptic must acknowledge that, would all the world conform to it, the human race would be as perfect in morals and manners as it could be. And what is this but acknowledging

the divine fitness, and, therefore, truthfulness, of the document, and, indeed, of the religion which gave it birth? What courtesy could transcend that which "thinketh no evil," which "envieth not," which "seeketh not its own," which "is not puffed up," which "believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things!"

"A holy life is made up," says Bonar, "of a number of small things. Little words, not eloquent speeches or sermons; little deeds, not miracles nor battles, nor one great heroic act, or mighty martyrdom, make up the true Christian life. The little, constant sunbeam, not the lightning; the waters of Shiloah, 'that go softly' in their meek mission of refreshment, not the waters of the 'river, strong and many,' rushing down in torrents, noise, and force, are the true symbols of a holy life. The avoidance of little evils, little sins, little inconsistencies, little weaknesses, little follies, little indiscretions and imprudencies, little foibles, little indulgences of self and the flesh—the avoidance of such *little* things as these goes far to make up, at least, the negative beauty of a holy life."

The aim of Christianity is to produce a sanctified and noble manhood in this world, preparatory for angelhood in a higher world. He that works well for his religion honors it, but he that lives it well honors it more, for such a life is itself the best work, and empowers all other work.

XI.

THE GREATEST POWER—CHARACTER.

CHARACTER, after all, is the greatest of *talents*; for it is the greatest moral power in our world; and some character we can all have.

Ambition—the love of power—has been called “the infirmity of great minds.” But let us not judge it too severely. It may be something much better. Great capabilities are usually accompanied by correspondent instincts, and love of power may be, in a superior mind, but the instinctive love of activity, of achievement, which belongs to great faculties. Rightly directed, and especially if it is consecrated, it may be a blessing to all whom it reaches. A superior mind can never be content without activity, that is to say, the exercise of power. This is at once an inherent law of the mind, and an essential condition of happiness. The restlessness of many men comes of inadequate employment of their faculties. Men, discontented, and yet fully occupied, are very rare; and when such cases are found, it is usually the fact that the failure of the law is only apparent, not real; it arises from their activity being misplaced; they may have been consigned by their parents and

teachers to a sphere of activity which is incompatible with their natural tastes, and life with them, though full of energy, may be a perpetual self-conflict.

The love of power, then, usually, though not always, means the instinctive love of activity, which accompanies the possession of inherent force—of real talent or capability of power. The exception is the case in which vanity or self-conceit may imagine that it possesses the inherent power, and demand, as its right, the exterior sphere for its exercise. Nature always avenges herself in such instances; the claimant's supposed power is sooner or later found to be feebleness, and he is doomed to the worst of all defeats—to self-defeat.

A noble thing is power, then—energy to act, to achieve, and an appropriate sphere for that energy. Blessed is the man who, with a pure conscience, can direct public opinion, can lead to victory an army for the right, can legislate for an empire, sway his fellow-men by eloquence, write a great book, invent a useful machine—who can, in other words, acquire and demonstrate great power in the world.

What is called *genius* is the best recognized power. Genius, however, is an ambiguous word, and any great intellectual endowment is usually considered to be genius. There is, nevertheless, a kind of power which is really superior to any mere mental endowment, any form of genius. It is

moral power. There may perhaps be some things in the writings of St. John which may be called traits of genius, but the Christian world has never paused to pronounce them such. It has gone on, from century to century, reading, praying, weeping, rejoicing over the glorious fourth gospel—more, probably, than over any other portion of the Bible. Why? It is not more a divine revelation than the other sacred books; but the *personality* of the writer, as in all the other sacred books, is revealed in its style, both of language and of thought, and that personality is so morally high—so pure, so loving, so pathetic, so divine, and touching to all our own best sensibilities—that we quite understand why we read why he is called “the beloved disciple;” while he reclined, on the *trichinium*, in Jesus’ bosom. There is a power in this writer that is above all mere intellectual force; the truths he utters are pervaded by a moral force, emanating from his sanctified personality. He is not only the beloved, but the loving disciple, and love intones his style, and subdues our souls to his tranquil but irresistible sway. Say not that we are imputing the power of the divine, inspiring Spirit to the human writer. What we say is, that his personality, as well as his teachings, reveals that divine inspiration, and does so in a most remarkable manner. In other words, the greatest power of St. John (the most powerful in the hearts of men, of all

writers, probably) is moral power, the power of *character*.

Luther had very vigorous mental powers, but it was the moral power of the man that re-enforced them all. The power of his character still keeps up his chief effectiveness in the world. Suppose documents were just now discovered which should incontestably prove his character to have been false—that as a reformer he was simply an impostor—what an annihilation of the man and his influence would follow! And why? Because character is moral power, and moral power is the chief power.

Wesley had great legislative and acute logical powers; but his moral power was the chief force in his almost unparalleled usefulness—the force without which all his other powers would have been comparatively ineffective. Suppose indisputable proofs were discovered to-morrow that Wesley was a self-seeking hypocrite—all his scheme of Methodism a contrivance for base, personal ends—what would be the effect of such a discovery on the whole religious world? How would Methodism, with all its real inherent truth, reel under that discovery—perhaps sink down and give place to some other embodiment of its truth. Why? Because, again, character is moral power, and moral power is the supreme power in our world. For, in its highest, its Christian form, it is “the power of the Highest,” the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, sanctifying the

human personality. "Ye shall receive *power*, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me." Stephen is characterized as "a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost," and immediately the context repeats, as synonymous, the declaration that he was "full of faith and *power*." Paul affirms, in remarkable words, that God "hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of *power*, and of love, and of a sound mind." He speaks of the divine "power that worketh in us," of the "work of faith with power," of being "*strong* in the Lord, and in the *power* of his might." The power of a good man's life is the power of God within him.

All manifestations of force are striking—of physical force most immediately; of intellectual force, less directly, but more profoundly; of moral power, most effectually to reflective observers at least. In even great material scenes, their tacit suggestion of power is the chief element of sublimity. It is not the mere physical mass, or contour, of the mountain range that makes it impressive; but the idea, however vaguely associated with it, of the force that lifted it aloft, stretching its foundations along the earth, and its summits along the sky. Niagara is picturesque in outline and coloring, but the thought of the force which precipitates its mighty waters, shaking all the adjacent lands, and thundering to the heavens, is the highest source of its

poetic effect. The planets themselves would lose more than half their sublimity were it not for the idea of their motions, the effect of force—those motions from which the archangels, in Goethe's "Chorus in Heaven," imbibe strength as they gaze upon the spectacle. Still more impressive are examples of intellectual power. The "Principia" of Newton is sublimer than any planet. The planets were but stepping-stones, by which his great intellect ascended for the survey and mensuration of the universe. Airy's and Leverrier's discovery of the existence, and even the place, of a planet, (which had never been seen,) by mere mathematical calculations, was a more impressive fact than the later telescopic sight there of our most magnificent world.

But moral power, the power of virtue, of character, transcends any such examples. Plato said that the sublimest spectacle in the universe is that of a virtuous man invincibly struggling against overwhelming evils. If so to the contemplation of a heathen, how much more to us who believe that the mountains are to melt, and the heavens pass away into nothingness, but that the soul of man is to survive forever? What is there to-day, in the whole history of Christ himself, more powerful than the simple, moral beauty of his character? His miracles are denied, his doctrines disputed, but his hardest critics bow down in unquestioning recog-

dition of his character. His enemies are compelled to praise him in the gates. His character is his greatest, his ever-abiding miracle, and to-day holds together his Church more powerfully than any thing he ever did or taught. Were it not for that, his enemies might well hope to triumph in these skeptical times. His character is the demonstration of his truth.

And who, next to Christ, in the whole apostolic circle do we most admire and love? Whose words touch us with most sanctifying and most consoling power? Who, of all human beings, presents us with the best realized ideal of Christianity—who, but St. John, the nearest approximation to Christ himself, the “beloved,” because the loving “disciple?” It is also a fact, well worthy of remark, that the *lowliest* of the virtues of Christianity, those least prized by the conventional judgment of the world, or by even the Church in its worldliness, are the most powerful. Its meekness, its humility, its tender charity, its long-suffering, its self-sacrifice—these, when embodied in living character, are the true attributes of saintship and of saintly power. The world is compelled to admire them while it refuses to imitate them. They often vindicate religion even when it is associated with repulsive errors. What more gratefully redeems to us Romanism itself than the character of St. Vincent de Paul, St. Francis de Sales, Fénelon, or the saintly

women among the Catholic Mystics—Catherine Adorna, St. Theresa, Madame Guyon—notwithstanding their dreamy delusions? Whatever their errors of thought, they realized essential Christianity in their hearts, and their sweet, pure, benevolent, suffering lives are to-day the greatest moral power of their Church in the world. Fénelon erred when, reading in his pulpit the interdict of the Pope against himself, he closed his mouth forever on the subjects of controversy between him and Bossuet; but we know he erred sincerely, meekly, self-sacrificingly, and in accordance with all his religious education. While we forgive the error, we love the more the character of the man. Not in “*Telemachus*,” the “*Dialogues of the Dead*,” and the “*Lives of the Philosophers*,” does Fénelon live to-day, but in his transcendent Christian character. How he towers above the Pope who condemned him! How few of us can, at this moment, recall the name of that Pope! but to whom of us all is not the name of the meek and saintly Archbishop like ointment poured forth? Who doubts that he is higher than any Pope in heaven, or that his influence is more salutary on earth than that of any man who has worn the triple crown of the Vatican? And why? It is because there is somewhat of omnipotence in moral power—in character.

One of the most noteworthy examples of this power was St. Philip, the supreme saint of the

Russian Church. Early in the sixteenth century he appeared as a poor and weary pilgrim at the Convent of Solovetsk, far up in the frozen North. He seemed to have come only to pray and repose, but soon took the vows, and abode there in quiet, humble devotion. He was a man of personal beauty, intelligence, and taste. For nine or ten years he was a mystery to the monks; for he aspired to no distinction among them, but held his peace, and consecrated himself wholly to God, as best he could with the feeble lights of that barbarous age and land. When the prior of the convent died, nearly ten years after Philip's arrival, the monks gladly appointed him to the vacant place. He reformed the whole establishment, introducing into it and its vicinity all sorts of improvements—religious, artistic, agricultural, and mechanical. He showed himself a man of talent, but a saint in the purity and humility of his life. His quiet moral power enabled him to carry every thing before him, notwithstanding the fanatical, the almost savage character of his companions.

The mystery of his history remained until he was called by the Emperor, Ivan IV., to Moscow, to assist in the counsels of the Government, and at last to be the Metropolitan of the Church in the capital. It then became known that he was born a noble of the house of Kolicheff, Moscow, that his mother had early trained him to religion, but as a

noble he was bound to serve the Czar, and his education was partially conformed to that necessity. He became accomplished as a rider, hunter, fencer, as a scholar, and a courtier, and in early manhood was presented to Ivan, then a child, who became warmly attached to him. He was the favorite of both men and women in the court, and his prospects of promotion were the fairest; but the pious training of his childhood never failed. He longed for a retired, religious life. He found the Kremlin and its surroundings full of corruption and crime. Assuming the guise of a pilgrim, he wended his way on foot northward through "pathless forests," fording rivers, sleeping in the cabins of peasants, and often working for his bread, till he arrived at the convent of Solovetsk, in the Frozen Sea.

. When recalled to Moscow he discovered that Ivan had degenerated almost to heathenism. He had assumed the Tartar costume, and "adopted Asiatic ways," that is to say, Asiatic vices. "He went about the city," says an historian, "ordering this man to be beaten, that man to be killed. The square in front of the Holy Gate was red with blood, and every house in the city was filled with sighs and groans." Ivan's ecclesiastical counselors had opposed his atrocities. He remembered Philip as the amiable companion of his childhood, and supposed he should find him a more complacent adviser. Philip struggled against the royal

summons, but at last he had to obey, and left his convent, expecting martyrdom. Two venerable prelates who had rebuked the monarch's vices were driven away, and Philip was installed chief prelate. But he never wavered in his integrity; he refused to bless the Czar on public occasions when it would have been a sanction to his iniquities; he entreated him in the palace, he admonished him in the church, he meekly bore intolerable insults from him. Ivan threatened him with death, but he replied, "I am a pilgrim and a stranger on earth; I am ready to suffer for the truth." He was dragged from his church, disrobed of his pontifical apparel, arrayed in rags, and drawn through the streets on a sledge, amid the hootings of courtiers and soldiers, but also the sobs and prayers of the oppressed people. "Do not grieve," he cried to the latter, "do not grieve, it is the will of God. Pray, pray!" He was cast into a dungeon, chained by the hands, feet, neck, and left a whole week without food or drink; his family and friends were put to cruel deaths; but he was meekly resolute against any compromise of his duty. At last the executioner was sent to him also. "Give me thy blessing," said the assassin, as he entered his cell. "Do thy master's work," was the reply of the heroic saint, and he fell beneath the sword. His body was not decomposed, but petrified, runs the record—probably by the effect of the soil—and was disinterred and pri-

vately borne to his northern convent. In the reign of the father of Peter the Great it was brought back to Moscow, attended by an immense convoy of ecclesiastics and pilgrims, for the virtues of the holy man had triumphed. All Russia had been struck by the lesson of his devout and long-suffering life; he had become the head saint of her calendar. The whole nation went into penitential mourning on account of his murder; his picture is in every house, his memory in every heart; and, though the superstitions of the country are mixed with the popular regard for him, yet is his holy life the most salutary example, probably, that the religion of this semi-barbarous but rapidly advancing nation knows. He lies in a shrine of silver in the great cathedral of Moscow; and, says the historian, "On the day of his coronation every emperor of Russia has to kneel before his shrine and kiss his feet." That is a scene for the pen of the poet and the pencil of the artist.

Such is moral power—the power of character. Character, we have said, is the greatest of talents, and also the most attainable, for all can acquire it. In the distribution of wealth, power, or genius God sees it wise to discriminate, for what may be useful with one man may be disastrous with another. But not so in the gifts of his grace; in the virtues which make character, and invest it with unequaled power. The lowliest soul may attain to the meek-

ness of Moses, the patience of Job, the charity of St. John, the self-sacrificing heroism of St. Paul, to the very “mind that was in Christ” himself. And this is the highest source of the highest power on earth. No man can have it without being a living power in the world. Saintliness is a sort of moral omnipotence. In the pulpit, in the pew, in the workshop, in the school, in the dungeon, or at the consuming stake, it is a power that men most feel, whether they acknowledge it or not—a power that shakes the gates of hell, and before which open the gates of heaven. It may be yours, O feeblest child of God! and its usefulness, in saving your child, or the humblest servant of your household, may set all heaven ringing with those acclamations of “joy among the angels of God” which they utter over “one sinner that repenteth.” The world may know little or nothing of your good deed, but its record will be on high forever.

XII.

LOVE IN CHRISTIAN ETHICS.

CONSECRATION and faith are the conditions of the "perfect love which casteth out fear."

"God weigheth," says à Kempis, "more with how much love a man worketh, than how much he doeth. He doeth much that loveth much."

There is a volume of meaning in this brief passage. An able American thinker has published a system of Moral Philosophy, in which he attempts to base all Christian ethics on the scriptural doctrine of "charity," or love. This is one of the "deep things of God;" and the more valid for being deep, for being specially Christian. In those better times coming, when purely Christian ideas shall predominate in the speculations of philosophers, after the confessed failure of all other ideas, the doctrine of Christian love will come to be acknowledged as the primary and potential truth of all ethics, as it is now acknowledged to be of all divine or spiritual life in man.

"Love is the fulfilling of the law;" the phrase is not merely rhetorical, it is the literal affirmation of a great truth—fundamental in the Christian system. Mere "legalism" is moral servility, or, at

best, mechanical morality, its mere carcass ; love is its genuine *animus*, without which it may be perfect in form, in anatomical outline, but dead. The expression, the color, the warmth, the power of morality depend upon its vitality ; and its vitality is love.

He that does all things from love may err at times, but his very errors derive purity from his *animus*—from his loving motive ; he fulfills the law even in his error—the law in its spirit, though not in its letter. The remark needs to be cautiously made ; for hardly any error is more fatal to real religion than Antinomianism. But who was less an Antinomian than St. Paul ? And yet who has more positively asserted the contrast between the righteousness which is by the law and the righteousness which is by faith, affirming, meanwhile, that he did not hereby make void, but on the contrary established, the law ?

Now the righteousness of faith is not a righteousness exempt from the claims of morality ; it is not believing, trusting, without working. Though it is moral *life*, rather than legal works, yet, like all life, it acts, it works, and *must* do so in order to be life ; but it works by love. Love becomes its motive force and its law, and it thus fulfills the law—all law, without servile subjection to any. This is Paul's great theme. This is, indeed, a supreme distinction of Christianity as we have

affirmed. This is the very basis of its ethical system. You look in vain for any thing analogous to it in any of the classical or oriental ethical theories; nor will you discover it in any of the modern extra-Christian theories.

Paul magnifies the law by this evangelical theory; for he makes out that doing what is really *right* in itself, may be doing *wrong* in special cases; cases where love is practically ignored. While arguing, in his First Epistle to the Corinthians, against the importance of ceremonies, especially against the importance of "meats and drinks," under the new dispensation, and showing that a Christian man may eat or not eat certain things as he pleases, he, nevertheless, concludes the argument by affirming that to eat what, in itself, is innocent, would be sinful, if it injure a weak brother; and he touches the height of loving morality in his final exclamation that "if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth." There is morality! But what morality? The ethics of "love"—the love that fulfills the spirit as well as the letter of the law.

Hence Christianity has justly defined the highest ideal of spiritual life to be *perfect love*. This is the Bible perfection—Christian perfection. The Oberlin theologians teach a sort of legal perfection; some of our later "perfectionists" teach, it is to be feared, a species of Antinomian perfection. The

Bible teaches Christian perfection—not absolute, nor angelic, nor Adamic, but *Christian perfection*; that is to say, the maximum of practicable Christian life, according to the holy Scriptures, whatever that may be. That maximum we find in the scriptural doctrine that “perfect love casteth out fear.” This doctrine is but the grand scriptural postulate that “love is the fulfilling of the law.”

This great truth is the very key to the Pauline writings, and, indeed, to the whole New Testament canon. They teach substantially, first, that the moral law is, *per se*, universal, immutable, and everlasting; secondly, that, to sinful man, it is absolutely impracticable, and that, if he is to be saved only by “the righteousness which is by the law,” his best estate is one of utter hopelessness; thirdly, that under the Christian economy not the law, but man’s relation to it, is modified by the mediatorial intervention of Christ; that he has “fulfilled all righteousness” in our behalf; that for this purpose “God hath set [him] forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood . . . that he might be *just*, and the *justifier* of him which believeth”—in other words, that faith in this mediatorial provision justifies the penitent sinner before the law; but, lastly, that this faith is not a mere sentiment, it is an active, productive principle; it is attended by “the righteousness which is by faith;” it works, and works by the mightiest force of the moral world, by

love. Love is thus, in connection with the mediation of Christ, the fulfilling of the law. And perfect love is Christian perfection. Christ summed up the whole moral law as love to God—"with all thy heart, . . . soul, and . . . mind—and" to "thy neighbor as thyself;" and, in the Sermon on the Mount, he concludes his exhortation, to love our enemies, with the emphatic phrase, "Be ye therefore *perfect*, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."

"It is heaven upon earth," says Bacon, "to have a man's mind move in charity, rest in Providence, and turn upon the poles of truth." "He doeth much," as good à Kempis says, "that loveth much." The highest acts of legal right may be done with a severity of mere justice, which, though venerable, may yet be almost terrible to us. The smallest acts of goodness become great, sometimes overwhelmingly powerful, by the single quality of love.

Our Lord commemorates the poor widow's mite, and has made it notable and powerful through all the range and all the ages of his Church. It has done more for the charities of the Church and its genuine prosperity than the conversion and gifts of Constantine, the first Christian emperor. What a lesson was that which He taught respecting the cup of water, given in the name of a disciple—given in love! "Love," says à Kempis, "impels a man to do great things, and stirs him up to be

always longing for what is more perfect. Love desires to be aloft, and will not be kept back by anything low or mean. Nothing is sweeter than love, nothing more courageous, nothing higher, nothing wider, nothing more pleasant; nothing fuller, nor better, in heaven and earth, because love is born of God, and cannot rest but in God above all created things. He that loveth flieth, runneth, and rejoiceth; he is free, and cannot be held in. He giveth all for all, and hath all in all. Love all for Jesus' sake, but Jesus for himself."

There can be no self-exaltation, no spiritual vanity, in the sanctification which thus consists of absolute love. Love is inherently incompatible with any such perversion. Humility is the finest grace of charity. Jonathan Edwards says, of such a Christian, that "he is like a little flower that we see in the spring of the year, low and humble on the ground; opening its bosom to receive the pleasant beams of the sun's glory; rejoicing, as it were, in a calm rapture, diffusing around a sweet fragrance; standing peacefully and lowly in the midst of other flowers." "Remember," says M'Cheyne, "Moses wist not that the skin of his face shone. Looking at our own shining face is the bane of the spiritual life. O for closest communion with God, till soul and body, head and heart, shine with divine brilliancy! But O for a holy ignorance of their shining!"

Paul speaks of “your *work* and *labor* of love.” There can be no genuine Christian work without love. Love is its motor and its law. These phrases, love to God, love to man, appear simple enough at first glance. At certain moments they appear to us entirely practicable, and we wonder why they are not universally obeyed. But the Christian life is an art, in one sense: the most difficult, the highest of all arts. It requires sedulous, constant cultivation. And to the end of this brief probationary existence we shall have need to reach forth to the things that are beyond, to wait humbly upon the Father of our spirits, for that gift of faith that cometh not from within, from ourselves, but that is, indeed, the *gift* of God.

XIII.

A TEXT FROM GUIZOT—ENTHUSIASM.

GUIZOT, in addressing the French Protestants at one of their anniversaries in Paris, said, "Be not afraid of enthusiasm; you need it; you can do nothing effectively without it." Guizot himself was one of the coolest of men by temperament, but he was a philosopher, and could judge of the means of success in public movements like those of the depressed Huguenots. He belonged to them, and was a leader of their most orthodox party. He saw in their lack of enthusiasm the secret of their little success. Curious as the fact may seem, it is, nevertheless, a fact, that though the French are the most enthusiastic people of Europe in politics, and especially in war, their Protestantism fails almost entirely of the national vivacity and energy. It needs heroes, willing to suffer for the cross, and there can be no heroism without enthusiasm. French Protestantism was once full of enthusiasm, and it was then heroic indeed, both in the Church and on the battle-field, but it flags and lags now for want of its old animation.

That most illustrious of women in literature, as Alison, Mackintosh, Byron, and Macaulay pronounce

her, Madame de Staël, contended that there could be no effective religion without enthusiasm. She concludes one of her most remarkable books (her "Germany") with two chapters on enthusiasm, which she almost identifies with religion itself, and which Mackintosh pronounces incomparably eloquent. She not only taught its importance in literature, faith, and all true life, but she exemplified it. She was, perhaps, the most eloquent "conversationist" of her age, or any age—as all contemporary testimonies agree; and, though her transcendent powers were evident in her discourse, it is the general testimony of the writers of the period, that a certain sensibility, a certain enthusiasm, gave an irresistible magnetism to her conversation, and rendered it far superior to her writings. Her words thrilled like electricity. The historian, Lacretelle, records, through forty pages, a conversation with her on religion, in an evening walk on the shores of the Lake of Geneva, which is one of the most eloquent passages in French literature. She once held a colloquial discussion at her table, in the Chateau of Coppet, on preaching, in which she not only defended enthusiasm in the pulpit, but exemplified its power in a manner so remarkable that the record of it is one of the most memorable illustrations of her conversational eloquence. We owe that record to the celebrated Berlin Professor of Geography, Carl Ritter, who was present, with

Schlegel, the critic, Sismondi, the historian, and other eminent men who were at the table. Sismondi undertook the defense of a preacher whom they had recently heard, and whose discourse was more didactic than religious. Sismondi's faith was that of his friend and correspondent, Channing, of Boston. Religion, he contended, should be chiefly morality, not feeling, otherwise it will rest chiefly in feeling, and, having no principle, it will become insulated, and, therefore, fanciful and fanatical, and will again produce those excesses from which Europe suffered so many evils through so many ages. Religion, he affirmed, needs firmness, and the understanding can alone give it firmness. Madame de Staël responded, admitting the importance of intelligence, in religion as in all things, but insisting that feeling and enthusiasm are absolutely essential to it; that there can be no genuine religion without them; and that the pulpit should be the very throne of feeling and enthusiasm. "Her inspiration," says Ritter, "lasted through nearly an hour. Never in the whole course of my life have I felt more nervous agitation. I had cramps even to the ends of my fingers. There was in her something of that power which Alcibiades attributes, in 'Plato's Banquet,' to Socrates." The soul of this woman was full of fire, and though her mental power was of the highest order, it is her sensibility, her enthusiasm, that renders immortal her virile thoughts.

Enthusiasm is, then, a real virtue in the pulpit, in literature, in all life. It is a power, a charm in social life. It fuses surrounding hearts, and renders them malleable to the molding power of the master mind. It exalts theology above mere ethics, religion above mere morality, into divine and living realities; and, of all places in the world, the pulpit should be its focal center. A man, standing between heaven and earth, calling the multitudes from one to the other, what is he but a living caricature, without enthusiasm?

But is it not a matter of mere temperament, and, therefore, impossible to many men—men of cool, logical minds? And are not these men, however impassive, important defenders of the truth, and, therefore, legitimately in the pulpit? Now, as Sir Roger de Coverley used to affirm, “there is much to be said on both sides” of this question. The logical preacher is, indeed, an important man; but is it not a commonplace fallacy to assume that the logical mind must necessarily be a frigid one? Should not a man who, by his logic, feels himself strong in his convictions be also strong in his earnestness—in the fervor of his convictions? What is true rhetoric but ignited logic? The theoretical fallacy on the subject becomes a practical fallacy chiefly, we think, by the passive consent of the logical thinker. There are few men who would not kindle with inspiration under their logical argumentation

were it not that they so often assume that because they are logical they ought not, or cannot, be any thing else. Let them resolve, by God's grace, to dispense warmth, emotion, with their logic, and they will soon find that there is a heart as well as a brain within them; that God never designed that men who have strong heads should have stifled emotions. How many really able men fail precisely at this point! How often, toward the close of a strongly logical discourse, have intelligent hearers felt that now is the time for overwhelming power—that if the speaker would only strike home, from the vantage ground of his reasoning, with real heart-earnestness, he would add potency to his reasoning.

Many a man who now passes for a dry, ineffective preacher, a mere doctrinal logician, would rise to the rank of a first-rate pulpit orator if he would only resolve to give a place to his strong feeling through the last ten minutes of his sermon. He could thus clinch his argumentative spikes and sweep down whatever has withstood the force of his logical battery.

All men have hearts; all men are, therefore, susceptible of this great power of enthusiasm; but it needs to be cherished. The logical speaker needs to aim at the use of it. He should pray for it. He has been promised the power from on high; let him pray for that, and he cannot fail of feeling and of making others feel.

We have not, however, wished to treat the subject as applicable only to preaching. It is appropriate to all religious labor, all religious life. What is a prayer-meeting without more or less enthusiasm? What a missionary meeting? What the influence of a Sunday-school teacher over his pupils? What the influence of a Christian man in any sphere of life? Religion is, indeed, a creed, in part; but it is also a sentiment. It lives in the affection not less than in the perception. It should be in both. Guizot was right, then, when he said, "Be not afraid of enthusiasm—you can do nothing effectively without it."

Paul commends enthusiasm. "Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily," etc. "It is good to be zealously affected," etc. Enthusiasm is not fanaticism. The narrow, shallow streamlet babbles and throws its spray; the broad, deep river runs tranquilly but with overwhelming force. White heat is usually steady in its light. "Heartily," says Paul; he would have us put the energy of the heart into the conclusions of the mind, and thus give both full play in the life. There can be no heroism, no saintship, and, generally, no success in life, without enthusiasm.

Goethe considers it fundamental in education. His fiction, "Wilhelm Meister," is a treatise on education, in the form of a romance. The upshot of the book may be expressed in three propositions:

first, ascertain the natural aptitudes or predilections of the pupil; secondly, plan his destination, or business in life, in accordance with these; thirdly, as his education should be preparation for this destination, his education should be conformed to his natural aptitudes. His strongest argument for this theory is, that it secures the inclination on the side of the education and destination of the child; and, with the inclination thus secured, there will be enthusiasm in his aims, and, therefore, almost invariably, success. Few things wiser have been uttered on the subject of education. There is a certain extent of general education which all must pass through, in order to pass well in general society or common life, but this is mostly elementary; after this the whole training of the child should be such as his natural aptitudes justify. How much time and servile drudgery are now expended on education, or, rather, mis-education! How many years on music, with young women, who may have no natural capability ever to rise above mediocrity, or even to it, in that art—time enough to conduct them through the whole course of the natural sciences, or belles-lettres, or modern languages, or any thing else for which their natural aptitudes may better fit them! The latter, sustained by a glad inclination, would enable them to shine in any intelligent circle; the former fits them only for commonplace performances, or for invidious criticism.

Paul's injunction, then, of heartiness is fundamental in education.

But it applies also to ordinary life, apart from preliminary education for life. We have said that much of the discontent and wretchedness of life, and many of its failures, arise from the misplacement of men in their habitual pursuits. If they are in business which is not in accordance with their natural aptitudes they cannot put their hearts into it, and without the heart any habitual pursuit becomes a painful struggle. There is an immense amount of this misery in the world. Any pursuit, on the other hand, which enlists the affections becomes a pleasure, a sort of recreation, and, therefore, is likely to be a success. There never was a wiser precept for common life than Paul's exhortation to "do it heartily;" but it presupposes that our pursuits admit of the fair play of our inclination. It is wonderful how successful men have been in the most formidable difficulties where the heart has sustained and stimulated the other faculties, whether physical or mental. A measure of enthusiasm should enter into all our ordinary life. The average man is more heart than head; every thing that is worth doing at all is worth doing "heartily." This is not only the secret of pleasure in all good work, but it is nearly as much the secret of success.

Still more important is Paul's precept in the

religious life. Temperament has a great deal to do with religious fervor or zeal, doubtless; but religion is pre-eminently a matter of the heart; there can be no true religion without it. Even the *faith* that saves is not so much an exercise of the intellect, as a rule not so much dogmatic, as an exercise of the heart. “With the heart man believeth unto righteousness.” Righteousness is in the life, but, according to Scripture, it proceeds from the heart. Is not the most obvious difference between successful and unsuccessful Christians precisely here—successful whether in the pulpit, in the humbler Christian labors, or in the Christian home? It may be unqualifiedly affirmed that the preacher is never unsuccessful when his capacity for earnestness is fully put into his sermon. His head may be in it, by the most sedulous previous study, but when he ascends the pulpit he finds it is naught if his heart do not vivify it. And so is it in any other sphere of labor—every-where in fine. “Do it heartily,” is the supreme rule of success. Thank God, we all have hearts, however we may differ in mental capacity; we can all wield the chief power if our hearts be only right.

And this suggests one remark more: this chief power applies in the lowliest as well as in the highest spheres of life. Remember Paul’s application of the precept. It was given to slaves; and to such slaves as those of the Roman law, the most abso-

lutely enslaved of any the world ever saw. Even these Paul saw could exalt their humble, shackled lives by doing their drudgery “heartily, as to the Lord.” All things in the Christian’s life should be “done to the Lord ;” and whatever is done to the Lord is done to the highest royalty in the universe, and bears a corresponding dignity. We are too apt to think that if we had some great endowment—great wealth, great social position, great talents—we would do great things for Christ and humanity ; but, alas for us that we are so blind to the importance of *small* things ! They make up, as we have seen, the mass of things—the mass of working material in the universe. However humble thy lot, O man of God, work in it as for God and eternal rewards ! Put thy heart into thy work, and the work itself will take proportions from thy heart ; nay, from the very God that dwells in thy heart.

PART SECOND.

CHRISTIAN CONSOLATION.

CONSOLATION.



I.

PEACE IN BELIEVING.

HITHERTO we have treated of Christian Labor; we turn now to Christian Consolation, a subject not more important, but perhaps more grateful.

There are some truths which, like the flower in the bud, can be appreciated only when unfolded; there are others which, like the full-blown rose, present, themselves, their perfect beauty and fragrance; to attempt to unfold more their petals is to break them; we need but to behold them, and inhale their sweetness. We can enumerate their leaves, and admire them, but not improve them. The lapidary can add no new element to the diamond; he can only cut it in the lines of its natural cleavage till it presents its natural facets, each facet pouring forth its pencil of beautified, of iridescent light, as he holds it in the sun. The scriptural theory of human life is such a diamond truth—the regal Kohinoor truth of the moral world. For all things divine in our world are subservient to it—the Incarnation, the dispensation of the

Holy Spirit, the gift of the inspired oracles, the institution of the Church—life and death itself—all are for it; all are for the probationary preparation of man for higher worlds. Without it life and death would be an enigma, and, worse, an absurdity, a tragi-comedy. We have presented one of its phases. Let us look at another, a distinct but a conjoint facet. For though

“ Not enjoyment and not sorrow
Are our destined end and way,
But to act that each to-morrow
Find us farther than to-day;”

yet the evangelic theory of life does include enjoyment; no religious or ethical theory is less cynical in this respect. It not only provides, it enjoins, happiness, as a necessary condition of an effective probationary life, a motive of its duties to some extent, and a support of its self-denials.

But let us bear in mind that a probationary life necessarily implies tests, trials; its consolations must, therefore, largely consist of reliefs, of supports not merely in beneficent activity, but in endurance of evil. We shall consider it in both these respects.

Benevolent activity is itself a source of happiness, for the benevolent affections are, as we have said, inherently felicitous, as the malicious ones are inherently miserable. Christianity recognizes and

sanctifies this happiness, but it superadds other and ineffable consolations.

The Scriptures continually speak of the comfort, the rest, the peace, the joy of the consecrated man. "Learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls." "Ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls." There not only "remaineth a rest to the people of God," but "we which have believed *do* enter into rest." "Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him." "Fear hath torment," but "perfect love casteth out fear." "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace," etc. "Acquaint now thyself with him, and be at peace." "Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them." "We have peace with God." "To be spiritually minded is peace." "The peace of God which passeth all understanding." "I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: for thou, Lord, only makest me dwell in safety." "Righteousness is sown in peace." "That my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full." "Your joy no man taketh from you." "Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full." "In whom . . . ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." "I am filled with comfort, I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulation." "Let all that put their trust in thee rejoice." "We have access by

faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.” “Rejoice evermore.” “Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice.” “As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing.” Such is the common phraseology of the Gospel, such the very idiom of its spiritual vernacular.

The authoress, Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe, alluding to the revived interest of Protestant Christendom in the higher Christian life, and the consequent increased enjoyment of all life, asks: “Is there, in fact, such a thing as an attainable habit of mind that it can remain at peace, no matter what external circumstances may be? No matter what worries; no matter what perplexities, what thwartings, what cares, what dangers; no matter what slanders, what revilings, what persecutions; is it possible to keep an immovable peace? When suddenly called to die, or to face sorrows worse than death, is it possible to be still at peace? Yes, it is.” She discussed the subject in an American journal as a sign of the times, and remarked, that “evidences, at this time, through all Christendom, show certainly that there is poured, from the heart of Jesus, a current of faith into the hearts of his people, stronger than all the currents of skepticism and unbelief. There are at this time, even in the very highest circles of England, men and women who have been led to that entire consecration of themselves to Christ and his cause which the Bible sup-

poses." She witnessed an example of this higher faith in the demeanor and blessed death, under her own roof, of an English clergyman. "He belonged," she says, "to that increasing class who are sometimes spoken of as Christians of the higher life; those for whom earthly care and sorrow have ceased, and who on earth have entered into the secret of that peace which Christ giveth. There was about his views of religious questions a peculiar freedom from prejudice and passion, and clearness of spiritual insight; and the personal impression he made was of a singular restfulness and sweetness of nature. The peace which passeth all understanding seemed to be the habit of his soul."

The authoress of "The Schönberg-Cotta Family," writing on the same subject in an English journal, remarks, that "It seems to me this life is the normal, natural Christian life, which we all ought to be living, not merely a few of us; which we ought to be living always, and not merely now and then." A just view of the case, indisputably; it was, as we have seen, the common life of the Church in the apostolic age, and was the secret of its success. There were two most obvious characteristics of the apostolic Christian life; first, entire consecration; and secondly, absolute faith; and these are the postulates of the higher life, as taught by the modern apostles of scriptural holiness. Apart from the question of appellatives, or technical phrases, they are on the

right, the scriptural track, and we may bid them God-speed.

They have, too, let us admit it, some justification of the discriminative phrase "higher life," in the fact that though this life should be the common, the universal experience and example of Christendom, yet it confessedly is not. As a matter of fact it is really a "higher life," and were it to become common again, as it was in the primitive Church, we should have a new Christian era—an era of spiritual light and power and rapidly extending propagandism and general joyousness of life. This is what the most prudent advocates of the "higher life" seem to be laboring, praying, and watching for.

Again says this excellent writer: "The tenses of Christian life are not mere preterit tenses—they are perfect and present. 'Thou hast redeemed us to God by thy blood; . . . and hast made us . . . kings and priests,' etc. That is, we are redeemed and do belong to God now. We are not our own, but his; dominion over sin is not a vague promise in the future, but a possibility and a possession now, *in and through Him who lives in them that trust in Him*. The consecrated, sacerdotal, sacrificial life is not for a future age, or a limited number; but for the whole Church, every moment, now and forever. It is simply the translation of possibilities into acts. As Coleridge said, 'To restore a common-place truth to

its first uncommon luster, you need only translate it into action.' That is, when the Master says, 'Abide in me,' we are not vaguely to reply, 'Enable me to abide in thee,' but 'I do abide in thee;' not only 'I will,' far less 'I fear I shall not,' but now, at this moment, 'I do.' And the Master's response is, 'He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit.' The beneficences and endurances and sacrifices of the believing, obedient life are not constructed painfully as works, but spring forth naturally as fruit. It is not, 'that ye may have a little broken, interrupted joy,' but that 'my joy may abide' in you, and that 'your joy may be full.' It is no new thing; yet now it seems to me as if I had only half believed it. I never believed in any Saviour but a Saviour from sin; I never dreamed of any salvation but a salvation from sin; yet now every thing, every word of the Bible, every relation of human life, every thing in nature—old familiar hymns, the creeds, the services of the Church, the holy communion—glows, becomes translucent with new glory and significance." Yes, thus it is to those who "walk in the light as he is in the light"—who not merely occasionally emerge into it, but, by habitual consecration and faith, live in it. And to them is the pledge given that, while they do so, "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth" them "from all sin."

But our popular language on the subject, espe-

cially regarding spiritual enjoyments, needs to be guarded. Much is said about the "rest of faith"—much that is very precious. The phrase is substantially scriptural. "I will give you rest," is the pledge of the Master to those that come unto him, even though they be such as labor and are heavy laden. Under the old dispensation itself there was a divine experience which afforded perfect peace, and a Hebrew saint could say, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee"—the blessing and its conditional cause being both affirmed. Now this blessed consolation cannot be too much exalted. It is the peace which the world cannot give nor take away. It may abide with us forever, even as the Comforter, which imparts it, does with the faithful soul. But to teach that it is entire exemption from trial would certainly be a dangerous and unscriptural inference. Or to teach that the trial may exist, but is not felt by the sanctified soul, is equally illogical; for what kind of a trial would it then be? The holiest souls attest the contrary.

The *De Imitatione*, by à Kempis, is as noted for its extraordinary discrimination of the spiritual experiences and affections of the soul, as Shakespeare's writings are for his knowledge of the natural passions and affections. No book exalts more the gracious enjoyments of the devout heart; and earnest Christians have adopted it as a devotional

manual in all denominations, all languages; but perhaps in nothing does the pious writer show his wisdom more than in the care with which he guards his readers against mistaking inward trials for sin, or signs of the loss of grace; and shows the manner in which peace, or rest of soul, may be maintained, not only amid trials, but amid felt trials. "Where," he asks, "is the man who holds himself on his guard with such circumspection, that he never falls into some surprise or some pain of mind which disquiets him? But, O Lord, he who places his confidence in thee, and seeks thee with a sincere and simple heart, shall be always sheltered in such reverses! Whatever affliction or embarrassment may befall him, thou wilt draw him out of it; thou wilt, at least, comfort him in his suffering, for thou wilt never abandon those who hope in thee. In truth, we are but fragile men, though we may pass for angels in the esteem of others. To whom, therefore, ought I to confide myself, but to thee, O Lord, my God!"

And yet in all trials, he contends that the faithful soul may keep the "peace of God which passeth all understanding." For the Rest of Faith is a profoundly interior experience. There is an inmost citadel of the soul where faith remains steadfast and triumphant amid whatever storm. The impregnable fortress may be besieged at every exterior point; the intrenched soldier may hear the din of the as-

sault; its confusion may shake the walls; its smoke may even obscure the light; but he knows he is safe; he can rest in his security, in spite of the tumult which assails, not merely his defenses, but his senses also. He knows that the light which is obscured by the dust and smoke of battle still shines on above it all, and will again shed its radiance through the darkened port-holes.

The holy monk goes very far in his precautions on this subject. He says that it is not an infrequent trial of believers to be deprived temporarily of the "sweetness" of the sensible consolations of religion itself—that this is one of the Master's ways of testing his servants, and that at such times the soul should remain quiet in faith and patience, "waiting upon the Lord." "Believest thou, my son, always to have, when thou willest, spiritual joys and consolations? My greatest saints have been deprived of them; attacked by a crowd of temptations, they have sometimes become a burden to themselves, and suffered surprising relaxations of feeling; but they have possessed and sustained their souls in patience, resigning themselves to my care; they have known that there is no proportion between present sufferings and the 'glory which shall follow.' I have said to thee often, and I repeat to thee, Rid thee of thyself, cast off thy egotism, abandon thyself to me, and thou shalt have a profound spiritual peace. Give all for all;

demand nothing; attach thyself to me without division of mind, and with constancy, and thou shalt possess me. Then thy heart shall be free, and darkness shall cover thee no more."

Two remarks more: First, however desirable feeling may be, remember that it is uncertain, and is not, therefore, to be taken as a test of spiritual experience. It depends greatly on temperament and on accidental physical circumstances. Faith may abide in its absence, and faith is the condition of acceptance with God through Christ. Therefore, secondly, it is the failure of faith, not of feeling, that involves moral risk. "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin." In the darkest hour of spiritual trial retain firmly thy faith. Nothing can be more rational than that thou shouldst do so, for God can never fail thee. Say ever, "Though thou slay me, yet will I trust thee." Thou shalt thus have the rest of faith. There can be peace without joy. Joy will come to thee in due time, but be not eager, be not anxious for it; rest quietly through all trials, in God, by faith, and remember that no faith can be more acceptable to him than that which trusts him in the extremity of suffering.

II.

CHRISTIAN ASSURANCE.

CHRISTIANITY, as a whole, is a system of consolation for good men. Its provisions and promises are, in this respect, exceeding great and precious. But, apart from these, it has one characteristic which is singularly conspicuous and distinctive, paralleled in no other recorded system of religion or ethics. The familiar appellatives of its whole triune Godhead are endearing titles of benignity and tenderness, "very full of comfort." Its God is the Father, the Saviour, the Comforter. "Our Father, which art in heaven," (Matt. vi, 9;) "Christ our Saviour," (Tit. iii, 6;) "The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name." John xiv, 26. Where do we find similar appellatives in any other religion known among men? And what an attestation is it of the divine truthfulness of the system, that it thus brings down its most august conceptions to the style of the best affections, the most tender and yet most anxious needs of our common, suffering humanity? St. John must have written with tenderness, perhaps with grateful tears, that its "God is love."

But the Spirit is especially designated as the Comforter, giving light to benighted souls, guidance to perplexed souls, peace to troubled souls. All his offices are consolatory. It is not our design here to treat of them in detail. We confine ourselves to one which may be pronounced his most consolatory function—the “witness” which he “beareth with our spirit, that we are the children of God.” Rom. viii, 16.

Carlyle, in his “Life of Sterling,” tells an anecdote of a poor Wesleyan collier, who offered his life for a brother workman, in circumstances which rendered the sacrifice a rarely noble one, and yet the only reason which could justify the conduct of the Wesleyan is made, by both Carlyle and Sterling, to detract from the heroic deed. There was room but for one more person in the basket, or elevator, which was hastily receiving the colliers; death was inevitable to one or the other of the two men. The Wesleyan, knowing that his fellow-workman was unprepared for it, compelled him to get into the basket, and, exhorting him to repent and lead a new life, turned around and confronted the overwhelming ruin. He assured the escaping workman that he possessed the “witness of the Spirit,” and felt safe for the next world. When Sterling first learned the fact it produced a profound impression on his skeptical mind, but when he heard of the “witness of the Spirit”

—the collier's reason for his self-sacrifice in behalf of a fellow-creature—the heroism of the example was spoiled. It was then only an instance of self-conceit, of self-righteousness, or, at best, of self-delusion.

Such is the distorted vision, the real self-delusion, with which skepticism looks at the most highly spiritual truths. From an enlightened theological stand-point—from the stand-point of an evangelical experience—the reasoning of the pious Wesleyan was perfectly logical, and as perfectly scriptural. There was no more self-conceit in it than in Paul's declaration that he “desired” to die and “be with Christ;” or in what he declared of the apostolic Christians, that they knew “that if” this “earthly house of” their “tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, . . . eternal in the heavens.” Had the two philosophic skeptics known the religious history of the Wesleyan, or the spiritual history of any really regenerated soul, they would have known that his confidence had been attained through the deepest self-abasement, with heart-broken contrition, and that it was sustained only by the gratuitous grace of God. He felt, indeed, that he was “saved,” but only “by grace through faith—not of himself, it was the gift of God.”

Such is the peculiarity, the essential rationality and glory, of the evangelic system. It abases self and at the same time sanctifies and consoles it. It

gives triumphant confidence to religious hope, and at the same time allows of "no confidence in the flesh."

All orthodox Churches admit the doctrine of assurance, or the witness of the Spirit, though most of them consider it more an ideal than a real fact of the Christian life; all admit, however, that it is sometimes attained by individual saints. The Greek Church, the Latin Church, the great reformers, the rigid old Calvinistic divines, admit it. Edwards believed in it, and believed that his own saintly wife possessed it. It has been a special distinction of the evangelical Church of our times to revive and spread the doctrine as a matter of practicable experience for all saints. Methodism should prize as a pre-eminent honor its mission in this respect. It has been leavening by it the religious life of Anglo-Saxon Christendom, and, it would seem, by grateful signs of the times, that this truth, together with that of personal sanctification, may yet restore generally the primitive spiritual life of Christianity—the life of clear spiritual vision, of entire consecration, of joyous and adoring assurance.

One of the most noted philosophical writers of our age, Sir William Hamilton, declares that "Assurance, personal assurance, special faith, (the feeling of certainty that God is propitious to me, that my sins are forgiven, *fiducia*, *plerophoria fidei*, *fides*

specialis, assurance,) was long universally held in the Protestant communities to be the criterion and condition of a true or saving faith. Luther declares that ‘He who hath not assurance spews faith out;’ and Melanchthon, that ‘Assurance is the discriminating line of Christianity from heathenism.’ Assurance is, indeed, the *punctum saliens* of Luther’s system; and unacquaintance with this, his great central doctrine, is one prime cause of the chronic misrepresentation which runs through our recent histories of Luther and the Reformation. Assurance is no less strenuously maintained by Calvin, is held even by Arminians, and stands essentially part and parcel of all the confessions of all the Churches of the Reformation down to the Westminster Assembly. In the English, and, more particularly, in the Irish Establishment, assurance still stands a necessary tenet of ecclesiastical belief. Assurance was, consequently, held by all the older Anglican Churchmen, of whom Hooker may stand for the example; but assurance is now openly disavowed, without scruple, by Anglican Churchmen, high and low, when apprehended; but of these many are incognizant of the opinion, its import, its history, and even its name.”

How explicit is this language of religious confidence in the Holy Scriptures! “Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward.” “Christ Jesus our Lord: in

whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him." "In the fear of the Lord is strong confidence." "Hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end."

"Therefore we are always confident . . . we are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord."

"The effect of righteousness is quietness and assurance forever." "The full assurance of hope,"

"full assurance of faith." "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself."

Abel "obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts." "The Spirit itself

beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." "We know that we have passed

from death unto life." There is hardly any end to the enumeration. And the primitive Chris-

tian life was correspondent with these teachings. They were the familiar phraseology of the saints.

The Church must return to their old use and old consolation; the world is led astray about Chris-

tianity by the dubious, ambiguous language of its professors. They should ever have the language

of modesty, but never the language of doubt.

Christian experience is a positive matter of fact, and should have positive attestation in the per-

sonal history of all believers. It is thy precious privilege, O child of God, to know whom thou hast

believed, and to be persuaded that he will "keep

that which" thou hast "committed unto him against that day"—remembering that this is not of works, but of grace—through faith. Wait not to attain it at a maturer stage of Christian experience; pray and believe for it now, and according to thy faith shall it be unto thee.

III.

THE DISCIPLINE OF AFFLICTION.

SOME one has beautifully said that the afflictions of a child of God are the shadows cast upon his pathway by the overspread wings of guardian angels. The thought, if not the metaphor, is scriptural. Revelation does transform what heathenism, or philosophy itself, would consider maledictions into benedictions.

The interpretation which the Scriptures give of affliction is peculiar to them; and is so unique and consolatory as to deserve a place among the "Evidences." No religion, teaching a different view of the trials of human life, is fitted to the actual condition of man.

Some of the highest theological authorities, among them Warburton and Whately, have taught that temporal blessings were the only incentives to righteousness presented by the Hebrew faith—that revelation was not sufficiently developed under the Judaic dispensation for the more spiritual motives. The Psalms, however, show that afflictions were not considered as simply evils by the saints of the Old Testament. The Psalms are the best key to the spiritual life of that dispensation. What a dif-

ferent view would we have of it but for these rapturous, heart-uttered lyrics! They show that piety was substantially the same under both dispensations. Especially do they show this in regard to the sanctified discipline of trials. Afflictions were no maledictions to David. "Before I was afflicted," he says, "I went astray: but now have I kept thy word." The New Testament but expounds this view when it declares that "whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the Father chasteneth not? . . . If ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, not sons."

Paul gives the true analysis of the subject when he says: "Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby." He sublimely enlarges the statement when he affirms that, "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." And hence Peter declares that "the trial of your faith" is "much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire," and he exhorts the saints, "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you . . . but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are

partakers of Christ's sufferings ; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy." And the Church triumphant, seen of John in heaven, was composed of those who had come out of great tribulation. "We glory," exclaims Paul, "in tribulations also."

In fine, though Christianity is not the religion of suffering, in the sense of the self-imposed, ascetic miseries of popery—a Manichean tradition which has deplorably deformed religion—yet it is a religion *for* the suffering, in the sense of its consolatory sanctification of affliction. And in this respect it is in complete accord with the actual, the universal conditions of human life. There has, probably, never been any great development of character on earth without suffering. We certainly cannot conceive of any perfect Christian character without it. Perhaps we may even say that there can hardly be any very profound sense of spiritual comfort without it. "Without sorrow," says à Kempis, "none liveth in love." May we not also say that without it none liveth in peace? It is a gracious, though it may be a grievous, education. It confirms our moral strength by testing it. It proves to us the preciousness of our religious supports and consolations by giving them occasions of exercise. It corrects our worldly tendencies. It imposes the discipline of self-denial, the noblest *regimen* of the soul. It reveals to us higher truths than we could

ever attain in a life of complete content. It is not in the noontide light, but only in the midnight darkness, that the stellar worlds are revealed to us and the universe unveiled. "There aloft," says Jean Paul Richter, "the fogs of our days must, one day, be resolved into stars, even as the Milky Way parts into suns."

"Sour godliness," as it has been called, is not an experience for this age of the world, any more than it was for the apostolic age. "Look always on the bright side," says some one, "for it is the right side." Of course it is, for the genuine Christian. With heaven opening, in its radiant and endless vistas, at the end of our life of probation, why should we not go on through whatever trials, with songs and everlasting joy upon our heads? For the ransomed of the Lord shall . . . obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

"Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees." Accept thy lot, suffering child of God, whatever may be its trials; be, by the grace of God, made perfect through suffering, like thy Master. Mar not the sacred discipline by impatience or murmuring. And be reminded, also, that there is a holy ministry in suffering; the lessons of thine, to all around thee—to the pastor that waits at thy bedside, to the Church that prays for thee, to the dear ones that weep for thee, and, by

sympathy, share thy anguish—may be a savor of life unto life.

You sometimes wonder, doubtless, that he, your all-merciful Father, should try you so severely. You are tempted to think that no one around you has so heavy a burden to bear as you. Perhaps even the fallacious idea of the Jews in the case of the sufferer whom Christ healed—that for the sins of himself or his parents he was afflicted—may beset you, and you may thus be led to suspect that you are enduring divine judgments rather than paternal chastenings. Remember Christ's rebuke of that error. Many of our afflictions do unquestionably spring from our own conduct or that of our ancestors; but, even in such cases, to the believing sufferer, affliction is but fatherly chastisement, and becomes a sanctifying discipline, compatible with the highest spiritual consolations. Banish, then, all distrust of your Lord.

Remember well this scriptural theory of affliction. How clear it is throughout the New Testament! And how it contradicts our timid apprehensions! We might, indeed, readily suspect, in many of the severer and unrelieved and unrelievable sufferings of life, that we are accursed rather than blessed, were it not for the uniform refutation of that suspicion by the word of God. But the Scriptures assure us that as our Redeemer himself was made perfect by suffering, so we are to be

partakers of his sufferings before we are partakers of his glory. The psalmist often gives thanks for his afflictions. It was by the discipline of suffering that he was made humble and obedient. Understand, then, that to a penitent soul affliction becomes fatherly and disciplinary chastening, not punishment.

A whole book of the sacred canon is devoted to this subject—quite an anomalous fact in the canon—and the whole significance of that book is, that suffering, by the child of God, is blessing, though in disguise, and that out of it all there will, at last, be a happy issue—an issue of inconceivable, compensatory felicity—a glory which shall follow, and with the greatness of which the greatness of the greatest affliction cannot be compared. It was this view of the scriptural theory of the subject that rendered the early saints so triumphant in their extreme, their hardly intermitted trials. They were not willing to accept deliverance, for they looked to the final consummation.

Again, having well settled in your mind this scriptural doctrine of affliction, do not think too much about your trials. Remember that the divine Teacher himself bids you not to take thought for the morrow, for the morrow will take thought for itself: “Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.” Of course he forbids not prudent forethought, and the measures of prevention or relief which it

may suggest, but this is very different from that habit of anxious brooding over one's afflictions, and especially over possible adversities of the future, to which our weak hearts are so liable, and which makes nine tenths of the miseries of life. "Take no thought for the morrow," means take no anxious thought of it. Neither Zeno nor Epicurus ever taught a better philosophy of happiness than this. And how admirably it fits in with the whole "analogy" of the Christian system! That system requires us to be joyous in the Lord, to count not our very lives dear unto us in questions of duty, and, above all, to live by faith, faith being preeminently trust. An anxious, brooding, distrustful mind, how can it exemplify the evangelic system? Let us beware that we sin not in this respect. "Cast all your care on him, for he careth for you," is a divine command; let us not practically deny God's word before our families and friends by declining so gracious and so positive a counsel. No faith is more acceptable to him, or more sublime before men and angels, than that which holds trustfully to the hand of God in uttermost adversity. And none, too, is more logical, for can the all-powerful and all-wise and all-present and all-gracious God be defeated by any of our exigencies? Can any power of evil force him to belie his word? And does not his word pledge his help in our extremity? Was not the greatest of the patristic

thinkers, Augustine, scripturally right when he wrote, as a lesson of the word of God and of the lives of his saints, that "Man's extremity is God's opportunity?" Now, we know it can be replied that all this is easier said than done. But it can be done; thousands and hundreds of thousands of saintly souls have proved it in forms of trial which cannot be surpassed by any that are possible to our modern life.

Resignation is one of the most graceful of the Christian graces. Since Canon Farrar's new edition of the *De Imitatione Christi*, much has been said in our religious journals about that remarkable little book. What is the secret of its peculiar, magnetic charm? has often been asked. We think it is chiefly in its lessons of spiritual peace, though they are substantially lessons of self-denial, and especially of resignation. Evil is so universal that whatsoever helps our resignation, helps us toward peace or rest; and rest unto our souls is the universal craving of thoughtful minds. Most men would be willing to accept habitual peace as sufficient, apart from all joy; for is not peace really a kind of tranquilized joy—joy serene, settled and abiding?

In a remarkable chapter of the *Imitatione*, headed, "In every thing we desire, how we ought to stand affected, and what we ought to say," we have a striking exhibition of this identity of resignation

with rest. It is an intensely fervent plea for resignation ; for, to the devout Monk, resignation was rest, and rest the entiest comfort. It ends with a prayer in form, (all his pages are a sort of informal prayer, or converse with God,) which concludes like a decadence of music dying away in the very expression of the rest, or peace, for which it has been pleading. “Grant,” it says, “that I may die to all things that are in the world, and, for thy sake, love to be contemned, and not known in this generation. Grant to me, above all things that can be desired, to rest in thee, and in thee to have my heart and peace. Thou art the true peace of the heart ; thou its only rest ; out of thee all things are hard and restless. In this very peace—in thee—the one chief, eternal good, I will sleep and rest. Amen.” And we can imagine that we see the venerable, mediæval saint dropping his pen, reclining back on his hard, monastic bed, and sinking peacefully into this sleep and rest. “Thou givest thy beloved sleep,” said a much older saint.

The soul may maintain the inward rest of faith in any exterior storm. “In me,” says Christ, “ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation : but be of good cheer ; I have overcome the world.” Could there be more precious words ? Press them to thy heart, and be comforted, O weary sufferer !

IV.

A TEXT FROM LUTHER.

ENDEAVOR, we repeat, not to think too much of your afflictions.

Luther had a deep, tender soul, though at times rough in its expression. His experience of divine things was profound, as his writings and his Table Talk show. He knew especially what temptation is, and he had a heroic, sometimes even a humorous, way of confounding Satan, whom he hated with hearty detestation as the enemy of all righteousness. He usually put him to flight by prayer, but sometimes added music, and "fiddled him away;" for he believed the devils have a peculiar dislike for sacred music, and Luther was a born musician. Not unfrequently he threw Scripture texts at the adversary, as he did his inkstand, in the castle of Wartburg, where the stain on the wall is still pointed out to visitors.

Knowing well the human heart, and the subtleties of temptation, his writings abound in remarkably apt though rudely expressed maxims of wisdom on the Christian life, especially in difficulties of which he had himself abundant experience. Many a gem of apposite and consolatory

counsel could be gathered from his books—sentences of deepest spiritual insight. Here is one, which is applicable to the ordinary Christian life, and which, if habitually applied, would relieve innumerable perplexities of devout but tried souls :

“When anxious thoughts come you should ask yourself in what commandment is it written that I should think of these things? Thou, O devil, wouldst have me care for myself, but I must cast my care on God, for he careth for me.” The great reformer knew that this was scriptural truth ; but he knew more, he knew it to be experimentally valid, for he had tested it in hundreds of instances in his own much-tried life. He was sometimes in perplexities out of which there was no visible escape, for he had, in his great work, to contend with “principalities and powers” of earth, as well as of hell ; with spiritual perverseness in high places among his coadjutors as well as among his opposers ; and with the morbid difficulties of his own naturally melancholic temperament. Often had he to stand still and leave all to Providence, and then he, sooner or later, saw the salvation of God. So often had he this consolatory experience, that the passage here cited may be taken as one of the most intimate and confident utterances of his own inward life.

From a rational, or philosophic stand-point, this advice—to practically ignore certain actual and hard-pressing evils—would be considered wise. It is

accepting the inevitable. It is the central idea of the Stoic philosophy, though it is far from Stoicism, in the true Christian life. Philosophy, while teaching it, cannot exemplify it, except in rare cases where peculiar constitutional temperament is mistaken for philosophic force of will. If Epictetus or Seneca could exemplify it as well as teach it, the reason would be found rather in their natural idiosyncrasies, as science calls them, than in moral, inward support, or in trust in divine Providence, or in consolatory ideas of the disciplinary effect and future compensation of trials. The latter views are peculiar to the Christian stand-point; and at this stand-point, the soul, living by faith, can stand still and see the salvation of God amid the most overwhelming afflictions; can exemplify, as one of the simplest maxims of the Christian life, the lesson of the reformer.

“Cast all thy care,” then, “upon him,” tried and suffering soul, “for he careth for thee”—even thy heaviest burden, that of thy sins. Remember that passage, of boundless consolatory meaning: He bore our sins in his own body on the tree. If he bore them, let us be assured, that we need not bear them ourselves. He is infinitely sufficient; we only detract from his mediation, and mock his mercy by attempting, in our weakness, to share the burden with him. We have but to repent of them and trust in him with absolute faith, and then go in peace and sin no

more. If the tempter recalls them, or, as is often a subtle artifice with him, recalls some one, or more, of them in particular, because of their special or discouraging nature, bring thou to thy remembrance that other gracious truth, "the blood of Jesus Christ . . . cleanseth us from all sin." Luther had this sort of temptation, and he says that he often blessed God for the word *all* in that text. Swedenborg found this kind of temptation so frequent with himself and others, as to believe, at last, that there are particular demons who undertake the task of tormenting and overthrowing renewed souls, by holding fast in their memories, or consciences, particular defects or sins of their past lives. But faith can exorcise all demons. Christ bore our sins in his own body on the tree; his blood cleanseth from *all* sin; say then, with Luther, "In what commandment is it written that I should think of these things? Thou, O devil, wouldst have me care for myself, but I cast my care on God, who careth for me!"

When Bunyan's Pilgrim, bearing his sins in a pack on his back, arrives at a point on his way where he beholds the cross, his burden is loosed, falls off, and rolls into the neighboring sepulcher, where it is buried out of sight forever. What, if the author had represented him as, afterward, going back for it, and rebuckling it upon his shoulders, to bear it wearily along the remainder of his pilgrimage? He would have spoiled both the theology

and artistic beauty of his allegory. But how many Christians of feeble faith do thus, after repentance and pardon, resume the burden of their old sins, and bear it along their entire way to the grave! Let it be buried out of sight, in the sepulcher of the Redeemer! Sweet contrition may, indeed, go with the purified soul to the gate of heaven, if not into it, but not remorse, not the sense of abiding guilt. Scriptural pardon cancels guilt. It is justification; and "being justified by faith, we have peace with God."

And so with other trials. There are not a few through which you cannot see your way, but must absolutely trust the issue to God. In all such cases cease to care for the morrow—for the result. Be careful for nothing of this kind, according to our Lord's precept; for it is precisely in such cases that God would try your faith, and make it complete; and be assured that nothing is more consolatory, and nothing more wise, than absolute faith in him. It has made all the heroes, the saints, and martyrs of Christian history. It is the only true philosophy against affliction that is practicable to man. Throw thyself, then, absolutely into the infinite arms of God, and be at perfect peace. Wait and rest in him. He must be overthrown before thou canst be.

Death, especially, is usually supposed to be one of these things—the very consummation of earthly evil—though it is probable that, in the world be-

yond, it is seen to be the most precious blessing to man on earth, save the redemption of his soul; for through it we enter into eternal life. Many men, even good men, are all their life-time subject to bondage through fear of death, notwithstanding an apostle has declared expressly that Christianity is emancipation from this servile weakness. Here again apply Luther's counsel. Don't think of the subject when it is thus oppressive to you; leave it absolutely to God, and resolve to "live while you live" a full, strenuous, joyous, productive life. God will take care of you in death, giving you grace to die with, as he gives grace to live with. You will probably be surprised at the sweet accordance of your soul with the Father's will, when the blessed change shall come; or, more probably still, you may know little or nothing about it till you find it is all over—painlessly passed; and the good life, trustfully and joyously begun on earth, flows evenly on through the heavenly spheres and the everlasting cycles. If thy faith is perfect, thy love will be also, and "perfect love casteth out fear"—even this fear.

Do not attempt to supersede God's care of thee by thine own carefulness. When Peter was startled by his Lord's repeated question—"Lovest thou me?"—his conclusive reply was, "Thou knowest *all* things; thou knowest that I love thee." Let us not suppose for a moment that such phrases come to us from the hyperbolical idioms of the

East; they are, rather, attempts to get at exact expressions of the divine nature. God is the Absolute, and when we speak of his omniscience, we mean literally that he knows *all* things. It follows, then, that he knows the smallest as well as the greatest things—that, literally, nothing, however small, can escape his cognizance. For if any thing, however small, should escape his notice, then he would be so far short of omniscient, or *all*-knowing; and to be, in any degree, short of infinite knowledge, would imply that he is finite in knowledge. To be finite is to be infinitely short of infinity; for the finite has a limit, the infinite has no limit. To miss the target by one inch, is to miss it as really as to miss it by a hundred.

It is, then, not merely a fact, but a necessity, that God, as infinite in knowledge, or omniscient, should know the smallest thing as well as the greatest; should take cognizance of the minutest animalcule in the drop of water, as of the most radiant archangel before the throne in the seventh heaven. Seest thou not, then, O child of God, what this means for thee, even for thee, in thy conscious humiliation and littleness, thy fears, thy distrust of the divine care, thy dread of what thou hast called the contingencies of life? We see in the light of this truth, not merely the exceeding comfort, but the philosophic and literal truthfulness of those passages of Scripture which assure us that the little sparrow cannot

fall to the earth without the notice of your Father; that the very "hairs of your heads are all numbered" by him. They are numbered, not only on account of the graciousness of his nature, but of its necessity. You understand then why you, even you, though you may be the lowliest of all his children, may "cast all your care upon the Lord," because "he careth for you," even for you; and, by reason of his very Godhead, cannot help caring for you.

One of the grandest evidences of the Christian religion is this necessary correlation, this compatibility, of its teachings one with another, this implication and confirmation of its smallest truths, so called, by its greatest; this "analogy of the faith," as the old theologians call it. All those precious, minute truths about the heavenly Father's care of the lowliest individual child of his; of even the falling sparrow; his numbering the hairs of our heads; his answer of individual prayer; his providence, erroneously called *special* providence, extending to our smallest interests—all are philosophically true and necessary, as corollaries of the Christian, and only rational, conception of the divine nature, as Absolute, as Infinite. The Christian metaphysics herein appear as the highest Christian ethics; and dogmatic theology becomes experimental, practical theology. No penitent's prayer can fail of his gracious notice; no good deed, however obscure,

can fail of his regard and compensation; no good, misunderstood, and suffering man can be misunderstood of him, or fail of his vindication in the last day; no trial or grievance, of his feeblest child, can fail of his paternal sympathy and blessing. If the hairs of our heads are all numbered, what, then, of our repentant tears, our prayers, our good endeavors, our trials—are they not numbered? And if we have such a God and Father, what shall we fear, in life, in death, in eternity? “If God be for us, who shall be against us?”

How would you feel if you had, vested in your own person, omniscience, so as to know perfectly what is best for you; omnipotence, so as to be able to command whatsoever is thus desirable; omnipresence, so as to be always where any of your interests require you? Would you have one anxious thought again in this poor world? Now, though you have not these powers, yet your God and Father has; and he has pledged them all for your safety and comfort. He has put them all at the command of your prayers. You are just as well off, then, as you could be did you wield them all yourself. Though you sometimes think that, had you his power, you would do otherwise for yourself than he seems to do; yet, had you his wisdom as well, you would do precisely what he does for you; you would see it to be best as he does. Believe this, and trust, and pray on. Com-

mit your ways unto him, and he will direct your paths. In the darkest hour believe this, and walk quietly forward; for remember that this is your pilgrimage, your probation. You need, as a reclaimed sinner, preparation for the ultimate blessedness he has in reserve for you. Let him guide you in the preparation, though it be through fire or water. "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

V.

“BE OF GOOD COMFORT.”

“THE joy of the Lord shall be your strength,” says a prophet, and his words are not mere rhetoric; they convey a deep practical philosophy; for any thing, as we have said, can be done better with a cheerful spirit than with a despondent temper. This comfort is not merely a great consolation, the best that the soul can crave this side of heaven; it is a strong element of conservative force in the soul. “The peace of God,” says an apostle, “shall keep your hearts and minds.” There is great power in joy, but a steadier strength in peace—power or strength for practical work or struggle. Distrust or agitation never helps a difficult undertaking, but often defeats it—sometimes renders it absolutely impracticable.

You could hardly walk from one side of the street to the other on a plank a foot wide were it elevated a hundred feet in the air; but you could readily enough pass on it were it upon the ground. Why the difference? In the latter case you have confidence, self-possession; in the other you have not, and life or death hangs on the difference. Thus the peace of God shall keep your hearts and minds,

by saving you from fear, from distrust, from agitation. Giving you quietness and assurance, it shall become a source of real, of invincible force within you. The onsetting foe, beholding it, will recoil before your steadiness; your own blows against him will be more directly, more effectually, because more deliberately, given. Nothing on earth is stronger than the will guided by a peaceful conscience.

An apostle has said, “Rejoice in the Lord always; and again I say, Rejoice”—asserting not merely a Christian privilege, but a Christian duty.

But is not a happy frame of mind very much a matter of temperament, of constitution? It certainly is; and blessed is the man, and thankful should he be, who is born with such a temperament. He has an inner light which may gild all life. Hume, though far from being a religious man, records, in his “Autobiography,” his thankfulness for a naturally cheerful mind. He lived in an almost uniform serenity, and even died with at least indifference. It made his very style, and gave an indefinable charm to his writings, objectionable as they may be in other respects. Doddridge was a still better example of this genial temperament—an example sanctified by piety. Writing to a friend, he says: “My days begin and pass and end in pleasure, and seem short because they are so delightful. I have more of the presence of God than

I ever remember. He enables me to live for him, and to live with him. When I awake in the morning I address myself to him and converse with him; and he meets me in my study, in secret and family devotions. It is pleasant to read, pleasant to compose, pleasant to converse with my friends at home, pleasant to visit the sick, the poor; pleasant to write letters of necessary business, by which any good may be done, and pleasant to preach the Gospel to poor souls; pleasant in the week to think how near another Sabbath is, and, O! how much more pleasant to think how near eternity is, and that it is but a step from earth to heaven!"

We should endeavor to cultivate such a temperament; for we can do so in spite of constitutional tendencies. It is the divinest prerogative of human nature that it can, especially by the grace of God, undergo moral transformation. What is moral culture but moral change from bad to better? This is the sublime meaning of "moral agency," of "free-will." Man can rise, out of the deepest abyss of evil, to saintship here and angelhood hereafter. Many of the holiest and happiest saints in history were thus raised out of a sort of demonism. "There goes John Newton!" exclaimed the good pastor of Olney and friend of Cowper; "there goes John Newton, had it not been for the grace of God"—as he saw a murderer pass on his way to execution.

We lay too much to our temperament—too much of our sins as well as our sufferings. If it is bad, or melancholic, it is not merely our cross to bear, but our enemy, to conquer, or at least to subdue. Many diseases are constitutional, or hereditary, but science teaches us that if forewarned in early life, and led to regulate our lives accordingly, we can avert their development, and, in the course of a few generations, eliminate the hereditary evil. All the transmitted maladies in the world could thus be eradicated in the course of time, would mankind but heed that terrible yet most benevolent law called heredity. Let us thank God for science, which is his own revelation in nature, for such a lesson and such a hope, by which, combined with the Gospel, some coming age may restore the lost paradise of earth, as well as open wider the gates of the paradise above.

The lesson, just here, then, is that, knowing our personal temperament, we should aim, as a chief point of Christian culture, to resist and correct its wrong tendencies. The despondent man should remember that Paul's language is, as we have affirmed, not merely the expression of a privilege, it is a command, and an emphatic one: “Rejoice in the Lord alway; and again I say, Rejoice.” He should force himself to look away from the dark side of things; he should acquire the habit of thanksgiving for his mercies, not the habit of lamenting over

his sorrows; he should associate with cheerful friends, read cheerful and avoid cynical books; he should insist upon his right to rejoice in the Lord, whatever failure of joy he may find in other things—and of rejoicing in the Lord always. That is Paul's fundamental idea—in the Lord, and in the Lord alway. For, "if God be for us, who shall be against us?" If heaven remain, how little need we care for the loss of earth, or any thing in it!

One of the greatest facts of human nature is the power to form habits; and he that resolutely persists in forming the habit of a cheerful temper can, more or less, conquer any unhappy tendency of temperament.

But do not the words of the apostle need some qualification? Some, doubtless. The good man must suffer in order to his moral discipline; but nothing need invade the inner sanctuary of Christian patience and peace. "I take pleasure," cries Paul, again, "in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then am I strong!" Triumphant words, covering every possible case.

Take the worst case, as we have said, or what is imagined by most men to be such. The "last enemy," says Paul, "is death." But how emphatically do the Scriptures teach triumph over it! "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy vic-

tory? . . . Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Christ, says the Word, “hath abolished death;” “whosoever believeth in me shall never die”—wondrous words! figurative, yet full of meaning. Perhaps some one is reading these lines who knows that he is incurably sick and must soon die. For a man without faith such a condition would indeed be sad. But you, O servant of God, lift up your head, for your salvation draweth nigh! In presence of death, says Bacon, “we are like children before masks—frightened, till we step behind them and find there is nothing there.” “Death to a good man,” says Adam Clarke, “is but passing through a dark entry, out of one little dusky room in his father’s house into another that is fair and large, lightsome and glorious, and divinely entertaining.” To the good man death is but a transition through brief languishing and sleep, to higher life. The soul, waking in the other world, but assumes its former on a higher plane. It bears with it, probably, its old, continuous consciousness, suspended for a moment and graduated without serious shock, to its new surroundings, as a happy traveler crosses the boundary line into a new country, with other landscapes, other inhabitants, better conditions in every respect, but all analogous to the old ones. The heavenly world margins on this, though it rises and extends away in everlasting and resplendent perspectives.

The classical nations dreamed of the Fortunate Isles, the Hesperides, beyond the Straits of Gibraltar in the Atlantic; and none dreamed of them without wishing to be there. They were probably the Canaries, next to the Madeira Islands. Often we send our sick away to Madeira to save them, and some of them have to stay there habitually. What, now, if some beautiful island were discovered, in the distant seas, where all our sick could immediately regain health, and retain it perfectly if they continued there? How eagerly would we send them! What, if golden gondolas, with silken sails, and conducted by men like angels—Bunyan's "shining ones"—should come, at times, to our ports to bear benevolently away to the blissful isle our suffering ones? Would we not carry them on board with thanksgivings and benedictions? What if, when they lie down on the radiant deck, they should fall asleep not to wake up, nor know the change, till they reached the halcyon shore, and then arise to the joy of perennial health and perpetual youth? Would we not say to them, "Go, hasten and be blessed? We will stay and prepare for the next voyage, and shall soon join you, never again to be parted!" And when they arrive there no incongruous changes shock them; every thing is better, but every thing is compatible with their former life, a continuation of it, and analogous to all their best habitudes. This is Christian death. Well exclaimed the apostle, "Death is swal-

lowed up in victory!” This is the blessed fate to which we commit our dear dying ones in the Lord. This is that change which you, O ye of little faith, dread so much, but which, when you make the passage, will be but an entrance into the haven of eternal rest. Rejoice, then, in the Lord always.

We have seen what is the scriptural theory of affliction. “Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son of his”—a strong word. Those blessed ones whom John saw in heaven had gone up “through great tribulation”—a still stronger word, if possible. In the original it is a metaphorical allusion to the reiterated blows of the flail in the thrashing of grain. Blow after blow may fall—there may seem to be no cessation, no relaxation, to the attacks; but “in me ye shall have peace,” in all. “Let not your heart be troubled.” Let us rather repeat, at such times, good Matthew Henry’s prayer: “Lord, when thy flails fall fast upon me, may I not, like the chaff, fly in thy face, but, like the grain, fall at thy feet.” “We rejoice in tribulation,” says Paul—what remarkable words! What a theory of affliction! It is one of the many distinctive peculiarities of the evangelical system; and it lets down the very light of heaven upon the dark things of life. It reflects divine radiance upon every Christian sick-bed, every arena of Christian combat and struggle, every Christian grave.

“Comfort yourselves with these words,” for they

are the words of your heavenly Father, who, in subjecting you to trials, often apparently mysterious, deigns thus far, at least, to give you a consolatory explanation of the mystery.

These pages may be traced by some weary, weeping eyes. Accept, ye chastened of the Lord, our word from him to you; and, with the good monk, from whom we have so often quoted, end this reading with the prayer: "According to the greatness of thy goodness and multitude of thy mercies, look upon me, O Lord, and hear the prayer of thy servant, who is far exiled from thee in the land of the shadow of death. Protect and keep the soul of me, the meanest of thy servants, amid so many dangers of this corruptible life, and, by thy grace accompanying me, direct it along the way of peace to its home of everlasting brightness. Amen."

VI.

HOW TO SUFFER.

ONE of the noblest proofs of character is to know how to suffer well. And suffering is so common a fact of human life that its ministry, for good or ill, both to ourselves and all who witness our example under it, must be one of our greatest responsibilities. We have cited Milton's saying that "they also serve who only stand and wait;" much more those who, like the three Hebrews in the heated furnace, reveal with them the presence of the "Son of God."

There are circumstances, we have affirmed, in which to endure, in an exemplary way, may be the most effective service. On the other hand, how many with even slight, vague, but chronic suffering, detract from their religion by habitual repining and impatience. How many seem to take a morbid satisfaction in inflicting their sufferings upon others by forever talking about them, and by uttering cynical views of life; as if such utterances against life were not equally against providence. Many a family is thus kept in continuous unhappiness; many a young and beautiful soul, the daily witness of such an example, loses its early freshness and bloom,

and forever after sees life only through a jaundiced vision.

Dr. Arnold, of Rugby, himself one of the noblest characters, relates a charming story of his saintly but suffering sister, who for twenty years lay in a sort of crib, unable even to change her posture unaided, but who grew there into a sort of angelic loveliness, and thus contributed more perhaps than any thing else, besides the grace of God, to the formation of her brother's rare character. "I never," he says, "saw a more perfect instance of the spirit of power and love and of a sound mind. Intense love almost to the annihilation of selfishness, a daily martyrdom for twenty years, during which she adhered to her early formed resolution of never talking about herself: thoughtful about the very pins and ribbons of my wife's dress, about the making of a doll's cap for a child; but of herself, save as regarded her improving of all goodness, wholly thoughtless; enjoying every thing lovely, graceful, high-minded, whether in God's works or man's, with keenest relish; inheriting the earth to the very fullness of the promise; and preserved, through the valley and shadow of death, from all fear and impatience, or from every cloud of impaired reason which might mar the beauty of Christ's glorious work. May God grant that I might come but within one hundred degrees of her place in glory!"

We can hardly wonder at the moral beauty of Arnold's own soul after learning that for twenty years he witnessed such a ministry of Christian suffering. A certain writer eloquently comments on this example. How could he speak otherwise than eloquently of it? "Certainly," he says, "such a life was true and beautiful; but the radiance of such a life never cheered this world by chance. A sunny patience, a bright-hearted self-forgetfulness, a sweet and winning interest in the little things of family intercourse, the divine luster of a Christian peace, are not fortuitous weeds carelessly growing out of the life garden. It is the internal that makes the external. It is the force required in the atoms that shapes the pyramid. It is the beautiful soul within which forms the crystal of the beautiful life without. There are exquisite shells within the sea—the shell of the nautilus, many chambered, softly carved, pearl-adorned, glowing with imprisoned rainbows. There are ugly shells within the sea—rude, dirt-colored, unsightly clam-shells. The shells are as the fishes within them. To these is given the power of extracting out of the same sea the beauty and the grace, or the dullness and the rudeness."

Suffering seeks sympathy, but it is a wretched mistake to suppose that by habitually talking of ourselves and complaining of our lot we can secure the interest of others. This is the most effectual

way to repel it or tire it out. It betrays moral weakness, often a species of moral cowardice, which can never be grateful to noble minds. True men wish always to evade croakers. Noble souls always turn with tenderness and love toward brave and patient sufferers. Evil is not, indeed, good *per se*, but to good men God ever educes good out of evil. The pearl is said to be produced by a disease in the oyster, but it is formed in concealment. Great men are always modest about both their talents and their sufferings, but it is of the essential nature of all virtue to speak to the heart without speech. It has a mute but divine eloquence which constrains the admiration and tears of good souls—admiration and tears which it is their delight to give as a thankful return for the precious lesson of patience and fortitude.

Divine grace should enable us thus to turn evil into good. This, indeed, is its obvious design, but a design which can never be accomplished with a repining spirit. “It is good for me that I have been afflicted!” exclaims the psalmist. Were the question put to all good men in the world, Whence, upon the whole, have you derived not only the most good, but the best consolation of your life, from your adversities or your prosperities? the answer would be, From the former. How few of us would be saved were our lives without any of the discipline of affliction? How little would we

know of many of the highest virtues—of patience, fortitude, courage, trust in God, pity for man—without having suffered? And how many sweet and sanctifying experiences of divine consolation would we have lost had we not passed through those trials which test our faith and God's promises?

It should be remarked, also, that not usually the most positive sufferings, but rather, as we have said, vague and comparatively slight ones, especially if they are more or less chronic, are the occasions of a discontented temper, of talk about ourselves, and of the infliction of our sufferings on others. Maladies of this sort do, indeed, often become the worst kind to the sufferer; but, to a great extent, by his habit of thinking, of complaining, of talking about himself. It is especially so with what are called nervous sufferers. A physician of the London St. Bartholomew's Hospital has published a declaration that, from his extensive professional experience, he is certain that the usual self-indulgent habits of such patients are the chief evil of their malady; that the common prescription of rest, of idleness, is altogether fallacious; that in nine cases out of ten they need more rather than less occupation; that medical men do not find the hard-working statesmen, the overtaxed bishops, the tireless philanthropists of the realm complaining of wakefulness and mental wretchedness. Plenty of

occupation, especially if properly varied, is found to be remarkably sanative. But particularly important is it in such maladies not to get the chronic habit of complaining, of talking of one's self, of seeking sympathy. Brave endurance, with the use of simple sanitary means, is the best medicine. No, there are still better remedies—Christian grace, and plenty of honest, useful work.

In most such vague maladies the joys of faith and the preoccupation of the mind by Christian labor would be an effective mitigation if not a remedy. Another English medical authority says that "Mental influences affect the system, and a joyous spirit not only relieves pain, but increases the momentum of life in the body." In the memoir of the saintly Henry Venn we read that a medical friend, Pearson of Clapham, frequently visited him in his sickness, and observed that the "near prospect of dissolution so elated his mind with joy that it proved a stimulus to life. Upon one occasion Venn himself remarked some fatal appearances, exclaiming, 'Surely these are good symptoms!' Pearson replied, 'Sir, in this state of joyous excitement you cannot die.'"

On the treatment of such sufferings there will, doubtless, be all kinds of opinions, with the sufferers themselves, at least; but on one point there can be no dispute, namely, that the purified soul should ever exemplify its diviner life in whatever

afflictions ; that the beautiful example of Arnold's sister should be that of every Christian sufferer ; that, as in the case of Paul's thorn in the flesh, though the suffering may not be mitigated, the grace of God shall be sufficient for the one on whom the burden is laid.

VII.

KNOWLEDGE AND HAPPINESS.

TO the comforts of piety let us not hesitate to add those of the natural life. We should distinguish well the patient endurance of affliction from the Manichean asceticism with which the decayed Church has disfigured Christianity. The natural life is God's own gift, and should be enjoyed by his child. No one has a better right to its wholesome pleasures. Paul, in speaking even of wealth, says, "God giveth us richly all things to enjoy." The Gospel teaches the consecration, not the abnegation, of the natural life. To the devout soul the natural world is a revelation, a reflection of God, and has more than material charms. The pleasures of æsthetic culture—of natural beauty, of positive knowledge, of art, of literature—are legitimate next to holiness itself.

A writer on Prescott, the blind American historian, says that, "with another learned author, who was totally blind, Augustine Thierry, who wrote 'The Conquest of England by the Normans,' Prescott virtually declared, 'There is something in the world which is better than health itself; it is devotion to the pursuit of knowledge.'" This is a grand

and grateful truth—grateful not only to those who have not the enjoyment of health, but to all cultivated men.

We have remarked that writers on natural theology might find a special, perhaps we might say a supreme, argument, in the fact, that, by the very constitution of human nature, the grade of happiness depends upon the gradation of good things. For example, health fits a man best to enjoy the material world; intelligence, or the cultivation of his higher nature, lifts him to a higher plane of enjoyment in the intellectual world, where he may command a genuine felicity even with few material resources, or with but poor health itself; and, finally, virtue lifts him to the highest sphere, not only of improvement, but of happiness. For knowledge and virtue really have their own reward; they are intrinsically felicitous. God has so constituted the human soul that this grateful fact *is* a fact, an indefeasible fact. And what stronger proof of beneficent design, of divinely gracious final causes, can our philosophy discover in the whole universe! So true is it in regard to virtue, that even the evils which sometimes attend goodness must be considered as largely felicitous; he is a happy man, in his best susceptibility of happiness, who suffers for truth or righteousness.

One of the invariable conditions of virtue is self-denial; but is not self-denial, in a good cause,

one of the highest enjoyments? If it is self-denial of our personal, evil propensities, it becomes self-conquest, moral victory, with the ineffable exhilaration of victory. If it is self-denial for the good of others, the best sensibilities of the soul receive from it a recompense abundantly worth the self-interest sacrificed. God, we repeat, has made it so ; and the fact is a proof, not only that there is a God, but a good God.

The gradation of the argument (in natural theology) is symmetrical and beautiful. Health is the highest physical enjoyment, and health means obedience to God's natural laws. Intelligence is higher enjoyment, and intelligence means conformity to God's laws of the intellectual world. Virtue is the highest enjoyment, and virtue is obedience to God's laws of the moral universe. Thus happiness is graded to the gradations of our being, from lower to higher. A designing and a benevolent mind could alone have thus constituted the world, and have thus adapted man to it.

The truth here stated is, perhaps, least recognized in respect to knowledge. There are many devout men who consider it a very secondary thing. They forget the apostolic injunction, "Add to your faith . . . knowledge," and the declaration of the prophet, "My people perish for lack of knowledge." We could say much of the influence of intelligence on Christian character ; but wish here to speak only on

the happiness which God himself has attached to knowledge. One thing can be affirmed on this subject, without qualification, namely, that men who are best fitted to judge of it, men who have most cultivated knowledge, have most emphatically asserted its value as a source of enjoyment. Bibliomaniacs are never pessimists. Doubtless there are some kinds of study which are a weariness to the flesh, if not to the soul. There are intellectual inquiries which, if not morally unhealthy, are distressing to the baffled mind; but the knowledge of God's own works, whether in the material or immaterial world, can never be obnoxious to such an objection. The very labor of the acquisition of knowledge, when once formed into a habit, becomes felicitous. We have cited Lessing's remark, that if the Creator should offer him the alternatives of acquiring knowledge immediately, by intuition, or by the usual laborious research, he would thankfully choose the latter; and Montesquieu's, that there was no chagrin of life which he could not get rid of in his library; and Gibbon's, that if all the treasures and scepters of the East were offered him as a substitute for his books, he would choose the latter. Macaulay, in a time of severe domestic affliction, said: "That I have not sunk under this blow I owe chiefly to literature. What a blessing it is to love books as I love them; to be able to converse with the dead, and live among the unreal! Literature has saved

my life and my reason. I am more than half resolved to abandon politics and give myself wholly to letters." There are, indeed, greater comforts for the afflicted than books; the devout man knows that quite well; but how much better is his lot if he is both devout and intelligent? Why should he not claim the double happiness of which he is thus capable?

Macaulay gives us, in one of his brilliant essays, a charming picture of the "friendship" of books. "This friendship," he says, "is exposed to no danger from occurrences by which other attachments are weakened or dissolved. Time glides on; fortune is inconsistent; tempers are soured; bonds, which seemed indissoluble, are daily sundered by interest, by emulation, or by caprice; but no such cause can affect the silent converse which we hold with the highest of human intellects. The placid intercourse is disturbed by no jealousies or resentments. These are the old friends who are never seen with new faces; who are the same in wealth and in poverty, in glory and in obscurity. With the dead there is no rivalry; in the dead there is no change. Plato is never sullen; Cervantes is never petulant; Demosthenes never comes unseasonably; Dante never stays too long; no difference of political opinions can ever alienate Cicero; no heresy can excite the horror of Bossuet."

There are some inferences from the doctrine of

the immortality of the soul which claim the consideration of all thoughtful minds. Apart from its theological and ethical bearings, it implies remarkable psychological consequences. One of these is the prospect of intellectual growth which it affords. There are some characteristic facts, in the constitution, or laws, of the mind, which apply to the subject, and to each one of us personally. Let us notice a few of them.

First : The indefinite—we were about to say the infinite—capacity of the soul for knowledge, for growth. We can conceive of no limit to its power in this respect. Were an angel, or a saint in heaven, to be arrested at any given point in his progress, and assured that he must pause and stagnate there forever, he would sink into despair; for such a fate would be contrary to the very laws and instincts of mental life. Mental activity implies mental progress; arrest of mental activity must be arrest of mental life. The apparent decay of the intellectual faculties, by disease or old age, is traceable to the material organization, but not to any inherent law of the mind. While there are many instances of this decay, there are also many exceptions; and a single exception would be a demonstration. But, on this point, more directly. An arrest of mental activity, then, as implied by arrest of mental progress, is inconceivable. We must attribute to the mind an essential attribute of matter, if we

admit such an arrest. But if the soul of man has this capacity for illimitable growth, then, with eternity in which to develop it, what a prospect of intellectual enlargement and grandeur is before him! How sublime, how divine, the religion which has brought "life and immortality to light!" The soul, of course, is not infinite; God alone is thus the Absolute; but there is one respect, as we have shown, in which it may be said that he has endowed his intellectual creation with his own infinity. He has given it infinite duration; and the scriptural theory of the blessedness of redeemed souls is summarily this, namely, that with faculties for ever-growing intelligence and happiness, there shall be a corresponding limitless duration for their development; with indefinite capability, there shall be an infinite sphere of activity. Never becoming infinite, the soul shall be ever expanding toward the infinite; for it shall have an eternity in which to grow thus. The doctrine of the immortality of the soul is then correlative to its constitutional indefinite capability of growth—a strong argument for the truth of Christianity, which alone has clearly stated the doctrine, and is, in fact, based upon it.

Second, the indestructibility of thought, of memory, is another of these characteristic facts. Even matter itself is acknowledged to be indestructible, except by a miracle. What we call destructibility,

in respect to matter, means only its divisibility ; and divisibility is an essential attribute of matter ; it belongs not to mind. Many strange facts show the indestructibility of thought. Dr. Rush, who may be called the founder of the American medical faculty, records some of them in his " Essay on the Mind." He says that the old German and Swedish settlers of Pennsylvania, who were taken to America in their childhood, and had lost their native language, often used it in their last hours—the excitation of the brain, in abnormal conditions, thus enabling them to remember not only sentences, but words, syllables, even individual letters or their sounds. These had been forgotten for twenty-five or fifty years, but their memory was not destroyed, it was only latent ; it was indestructible. He mentions the case of a man who had put away a will, and for years had forgotten where it was deposited ; when it was needed no search could discover it, no effort of memory recall its place, but in a dream he saw it in a barrel, filled with paper refuse, in his attic. The next day it was found there. Such facts would be called by some good people providential revelations, and such they may be in some cases ; but if even so, they are brought about by means, and the means in this instance was the ever-abiding, though dormant, memory, revived abnormally in the anxious mind of the dreamer. Coleridge re-

cords an example which has interested all psychologists. An illiterate German servant-maid was heard to repeat, in the excitement of fever, passages from the most erudite works of the Rabbins, and other Oriental scholars, in Hebrew and Chaldaic. It was an unaccountable mystery, and led to an inquiry into her antecedents, when it was found that she had years before been at service in the family of an old German scholar, who was in the habit of reading his learned books while walking on his piazza, through the open windows of which the untutored girl had heard his unintelligible articulations, and she had faithfully remembered them, though they were to her but senseless sounds. Drowning persons, who, after losing consciousness, have been restored, report that the minutest events of all their past lives were pictured vividly in the memory, in the last efforts of consciousness, and this experience seems to be invariable in drowning. Thus, then, from the very nature of the mind, and the facts of its experience, thought would seem to be indestructible. The loss of memory is but a temporary obscuration, arising from physical conditions, and relieved by new physical conditions, or by exemption from all such conditions.

Again, the faculty or law of generalization not only serves to advance knowledge, but to simplify it; it also leads to the grand and beautiful fact

that the more we know the more we can know. This is a precept of the Baconian Philosophy, and Paul, as we shall show, saw it before Bacon. Induction of facts leading to principles, and deduction from principles leading to generalizations, to laws; this is the whole process of Baconism; this is the process by which we make "sciences." Now by this process the details of knowledge are at last dropped for their generalized significance, so that your child in the public school may to-day know more of astronomy than Ptolemy or even Newton, more of botany than Linnæus—not have as great a mind, but really have more knowledge or truth. The details are not lost; their intrinsic significance is kept, and is blended in the generalization; but no student of mineralogy need study every stone, as the founders of the science did; he studies only their generalizations, their science, and thus knows all they knew, and does so with infinitely less labor than they had to perform.

It is by this fact of the intellectual world that we explain Paul's notable passage in 1 Cor. xiii, 8-12, an anticipation of Baconian generalization. At first view Paul would seem to depreciate knowledge—"it shall vanish away;" but he shows how it shall "vanish:" by being absorbed in the higher, generalized knowledge. He first knew "as a child," then as "a man," knowing only "in part;"

but at last shall know "even as he is known"—on a scale in which all previous knowledge shall seem to have "vanished away," being absorbed in the higher generalizations, as the letters of the alphabet seem to be unnoticed by a practiced reader, glancing over an eloquent page, though every letter, every dot of punctuation, is really perceived, and passes through the eye and the brain.

Put these four facts together: Indefinite mental capability; the indestructibility of thought; generalization, ever simplifying knowledge, that is to say, truth; and eternity, for its acquisition; and what an uncomprehended destiny awaits the human being, considered only as an intellect! The archangel, standing to-day on the highest acclivity of knowledge yet reached by created mind, will, indeed, go on forever, and you may never excel them, but where they stand to-day you may stand in some era of eternity. Such, then, is the soul intellectually considered alone. What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose such a soul? It is with such thoughts that we can understand the inestimable value of the soul, as affirmed by holy Scripture, the intervention of Christ for it, and the interest of angels, who rejoice in the heavens over its salvation.

Such is the prospective glory of knowledge, much as it may be below the prospect of moral growth and sentient happiness implied by immortality.

“Add to your faith,” says an apostle, “virtue; and to virtue, knowledge.” Solomon prayed for wisdom and knowledge. “Wise men lay up knowledge.” “Every prudent man dealeth with knowledge.” “That the soul should be without knowledge is not good.” “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.” “The priest’s lips should keep knowledge.” In Christ “are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.”

Finally, let us add, that literature, while one of the greatest, is also one of the most attainable, enjoyments. There is hardly any poor household that cannot have its library, containing such knowledge as kings could not command before the art of printing. What a providential provision is this! A comparatively small sum, saved from your useless luxuries, would be sufficient to procure nearly all the variety of works needed for this rich domestic comfort. How many happy evenings could you have with a few of them at your winter fireside! How many hours of sadness could be thus sustained and transmuted into seasons of consolation! How medicinal would they be to the mind, and even to the body in wearisome days on the sick-bed! What an entertainment to failing old age! What a genial and salutary source of impressions to childhood! The time, we think, will come when, in every well-ordered family, the domestic library will be esteemed one of the most indispensable,

most befitting articles of furniture—the nourishment of the mind no less important than the nourishment of the body; when piety shall be reinforced by intelligence, and intelligence shall be beautified by piety. Then

“ mind and soul, according well,
Shall make one music, as before,
But vaster.”

Then shall we begin to approach to the similitude of Him in whose likeness we are to awake after this experience of mortality.

VIII.

THE END—HOW MUCH WE HAVE TO DIE FOR.

“**Y**OU have so much to live for,” was said to a dying disciple, who was surrounded with every convenience and refinement of life. “But I have so much to die for!” was the reply of the sufferer.

It was a befitting reply. How can there be any other from the thoughtful child of God, before whose faith the everlasting city is looming in radiant vision?

Was not this the habitual consciousness of the primitive saints? Paul said he desired to depart and be with Christ. He represents the Christians of his day as suffering, as groaning, being burdened with their mortal life, and desiring to be relieved of it; not as if they would be unclothed, but clothed upon with immortal life. They were patiently to endure it, as seeing Him who is invisible; but they longed for the glorious appearing of their Lord. And the prospect of the celestial city was not, with them, a vague hope. “We know,” Paul says, speaking of them all, “that, if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with

hands, eternal in the heavens." How strangely falls this language upon the ear of a classical scholar, who turns away from the best pages of the Greek philosophy, on the future of the human soul, to Paul's exposition of the supernatural!

Is it possible to bear habitually along with us, from day to day, this consolatory consciousness of the apostolic Church?—to have thus our conversation already in heaven, while struggling through the trials of our pilgrimage? It is. And yet let us speak considerately on the subject; it is not a theme for rhapsody though it be one for rapture. Indisputably there is special grace for our special conditions. There is grace to die with, as well as grace to live with; and we are not to expect God to impart his grace to us superfluously, or at unsuitable times. Still, if we need not dying grace now, we certainly need grace to save us from the fear of death. Christ came to deliver those who through fear of death were all their life-time subject to bondage. None of his saints are required to endure this moral slavery. And do we not read of a perfect love which casteth out fear? Fear hath torment, but what have those to do with torment whose sins, however dark their dye, have been washed out by Him whose "blood cleanseth from all sin?" They may, indeed, sing, though with eyes wet with penitential tears, "O Death, where is thy sting? O

Grave, where is thy victory? . . . Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Again, indisputably, the primitive saints lived in a sort of death, or peril of death, which required special grace; and they were abundantly supplied with it. To be a Christian, in those early times, was to invite martyrdom. They could not count their lives dear unto them, for they were treated as the offscouring of the earth; and in the great persecutions through continued generations we number the blessed martyrs by thousands and tens of thousands. For these successive generations the daily grace needed by the Church was a dying grace. They confronted death so much, they became so familiar with it, and with the triumph of their martyred brethren over it, that they came at last to be joyfully defiant of it. And what forms of death had they to confront! Our imaginations shrink from the old records of them; but the saintly eyes of men, women, and children quailed not before them. They saw them transformed with glory. They saw, above the Coliseum, visions of waiting angels and waving palm-branches, and heard the harmonies of the everlasting songs. We doubt not that it was comparatively easy for them to die even such appalling deaths as they were subjected to; for the whole Church was pervaded by a heroic, a divine enthusiasm for martyr-

dom. Their leaders had to restrain them from rushing upon death. Their Lord had died for them, and they were ready and waiting to die for Him and for one another. It was a peculiar, a wonderful age! As they were continually near martyrdom, they were continually near heaven, and longed to enter in. To their spiritual vision the gate of heaven seemed so near the gate of the Church, that the passage from one to the other was but a step. The heavenly Jerusalem had descended from heaven, and was one, in a sense, with the Church. It is hardly possible for us to imagine the full effect of such circumstances on the minds of fervently devout men who valued life chiefly as a means of saving others, their very persecutors, and who thus shared in the fellowship of Christ's sufferings for the lost world.

How contrasted our condition with theirs! Our needed grace is not such as overcomes the instinct of life, of self-preservation, which is doubtless a law of nature, and which, while enabling us to suffer much that is in life, also enables us to live on in comfortable and blessed usefulness to our fellow-creatures; but still the grace we need is such as can save us meanwhile from the fear of death. This is one of the liabilities of our condition, and the grace of God is given for all our liabilities. If we live not in habitual exposure to martyrdom, we do, nevertheless, live in habitual exposure to death.

Our Christian consciousness should, therefore, ever cheerfully recognize this fact, and on each day of our pilgrimage over the desert of life, we should be ready to strike our tent and hasten away beyond the horizon. The night may still linger at the point where we are, in the desert, but could we hasten beyond, we should see the day rising with gladness and glory.

The Christian theory of human life, namely, that it is probationary, is confirmed by death—one of the most universal of natural facts—if we may call it such. Death is the most certain correlative of life—as universal a fact as birth. The Stoics taught that the best remedy for the fear of death is familiarity with it by frequent meditation on it. We may well doubt the efficacy of such a remedy, unless the meditation include something more than death itself. To the Christian the Stoic prescription may be relevant, for his meditation of the subject may be in the light of immortality and eternal life. Revelation circles the dying head of the good man with a divine halo; but what comfort can there be in the contemplation of death *per se*?

One of the best confutations of infidelity is that death is the consummate failure of life, and of all things pertaining to life. It has, therefore, from the skeptical stand-point, no analogy with human life; no compatibility with any of the motives, the aspirations, or aims, that are essential to, and that ennoble

human life. And such a lack of compatibility is contrary to all the rest of human history on earth, and to all the natural world; it is contrary to what is called "the nature of things." Such a view of death is refuted by every worthy, every just view of life. Has nature committed a blunder in this case, and such a blunder, too, as exists nowhere else in all her scheme?

To the reflecting man there is, even apart from any religious prepossessions, a very solemn, and, without Christian faith, a tragically sublime, interest in death, viewed simply in its general aspect—the procession of humanity over and off this planet into the mysterious unknown. What a procession of the generations it is! How solemn, and yet how majestic, how inevitable, that march! For no one—monarch or slave, sage or dolt—can evade this stern conscription; all must move forward, to the tolling bell of time, into the invisible future. Can any thoughtful man repress the cry, Whither?

How striking the spectacle is when we view it in books of history! On one page we become interested, dazzled, by the rife and splendid life of an epoch—of the court of the Stuarts, in Macaulay, or that of the Grand Monarque, in Voltaire. We turn the pages, and one after another of the prominent personages disappears, dies. We reach a point at last where all have given way to new characters and a new epoch. Princes,

and courtiers, and plebeians; the great statesmen, the great captains, the gay court beauties, all have fretted through their careers of rivalry, of luxury, of sin, and sleep forever in silence. How long the period seemed in prospect! How short it seems in retrospect! However resounding the names or deeds of any of them were in their day, not one of them will ever rise again to make a sign to the human race. We pass on through the history of another generation, and the curtain again falls, shutting forever from view its last historic actor.

What does it mean, this stupendous fact of the living, dying world! We ask not, What does it mean to the Christian thinker? To him, with his doctrine of a future life, and the consequent probationary nature of the present life, its lesson is intelligible enough, and full of poetry and of logic; but what does it, what can it mean, to the thoughtful, candid infidel, if any such there be?

There are some inferior creatures which far surpass man in the duration of life. There are elephants, treading the plains of Hindustan to-day, within whose life-time all the sovereigns, the captains, the sages, the toilers, who were on the earth at their birth have passed away. There are owls, tortoises, toads, mere reptiles, which outlive generations of men. Man, to whom all are, in the scheme of nature, subordinate, hastens through the discipline of life, inevitably growing better or worse by

it—hastens out of the visible arena into the higher or lower sphere for which he has prepared himself. Do we ask again, What is the meaning of it? Is it not obvious, O reflecting man? Would not all life, and all the system of the world, end in an astonishing solecism were it not for the Christian doctrine of probation?—*end*, we say, for it would be a solecism without precedent in life itself. Every other link in its chain but the last is logically and beneficently correlated. Can, then, the last, the golden link, hang on nothing? Can any thing hang on nothing?

There is one point of view from which this transition of humanity, generation after generation, over the planet and into eternity, appears as a beneficent law. Without death the world would, in fewer generations than we perhaps imagine, be so densely peopled that all increase of human life would be impossible. By death, therefore, there is made possible an infinitely greater amount of individual life—an infinitely larger number of candidates for immortality and eternal life. If man could not have died without sin, it is probable that he nevertheless would have passed to higher worlds, translated, like Enoch, generation after generation. But still the evangelic doctrine of probation recurs; it applies to every possible hypothesis of life, and without it life is inexplicable.

What, then, O man of God, is the ultimate of

this high argument? What but that life is valuable only in its relation to eternity; that discipline and duty are its greatest interests here; that affliction, however grievous to thy short-sighted vision, is but a transient cloud, and will pass away, leaving the eternal sun shining above and before thee?

“Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord.” Yes, death is blessed to the child of God, however his imperfect fancy may picture it as dreadful. Paul desired it, because it is the true beginning of life—the everlasting life—to purified souls. The embryonic human being has life—but not its appointed life; it must be born into what is, to it, a new world before it can have its completed life; and it is quite probable that the redeemed soul, in emerging from its material into its immaterial state, passes through a similar revolution, perhaps a greater; but still, as we have said, with the old continuous consciousness briefly suspended as in sleep. One of the reasons why the Scriptures are so reticent about the future state may be, that its marvelous conditions and felicities are such as would create an excess of splendor; the vision might dazzle us into blindness. One thing we may be sure of: that the very infinitude of God’s power and wisdom and love will be put forth in the beatitude of his saints, when he has brought them through their preparatory discipline of action and endurance. No

wonder, then, that Paul, who was caught up into the heavens, and had a glimpse of their glories, saw things unutterable, and ever afterward desired to depart and be with Christ. Gird up, then, thy remaining strength, O child of God, and fear not. Thy Redeemer has swept, in his full triumph, through the gates of death, followed not only by legions of angels, but—blessed thought for repentant sinners!—by the pardoned thief who died by his side on the cross, the first trophy of his finished redemption. He has left the whole way full of the shining of his glory. Why, then, should we fear to tread it with our pilgrim feet, weary of the long probation on earth? Let us make final and complete consecration of all things unto him, and then both lay us down in peace, and sleep, or die, without one care about the morrow—one anxious care. Cannot God, who takes care of the sparrow and of the archangel, take care of us? Why should we be so eager to supplement his care by our own poor anxieties? Faith must take the place of care with us; this is all he requires—and how gracious is his requisition!

Again: Remind thyself that most of the occasions of thy fear are but fancies, which have no reality whatever, and, therefore, will not affect thee in the dreaded process of thy change. Many have feared death chiefly on account of its supposed

physical pains ; but this apprehension is contrary to the best evidence we have on the subject. Medical writers have found good reason to doubt whether the final dissolution is attended with any real suffering. More than this, they adduce strong evidence going to prove that it is even an agreeable experience. Brodie, one of the best authorities, wrote in detail on the subject, and reached the latter conclusion. He witnessed hundreds of deaths, and says there were but two or three that did not seem to confirm his opinion. The most reliable experience of death, which can come under scientific cognizance, is that of drowning, in which, after the last consciousness possible in the process has been lost, resuscitation has been artificially effected ; and there is one invariable testimony in such cases, namely, that the whole process is one of exquisite enjoyment. The famous surgeon, Hunter, was not a devout man, but on his death-bed he declared himself unable to describe to his medical friends the wonderful bliss of dying—of the mere physical sensations of the change. They would seem to be like that delicious sense of languor and rest which attends the coming of sleep. The apparent symptoms of convulsive distress, in some instances, are scientifically reconcilable with this view of the question. They are automatic. We know that they are often so in affections not unto death. The supposed sufferer comes out of them

with no consciousness, no recollection of them. Montaigne records his own experience on the subject; his apparent sufferings, his spasms, were so marked that his attendants were clamorous with their sympathies; his first consciousness was indicated by his remonstrance to them: "Why will you disturb my sweet dream!"

Again: How often the merely fictitious associations of the grave dismay us—its silence, its solitude, its corruption, the funereal ceremonies wherewith the dead are borne to it! But what are these associations? Only illusions—poetical fancies. You would not have them if a wax statue were clothed with your cast-off raiment and subjected to like observances. And what is your wasted body, after the soul's escape, but your cast-off garment? Let it be laid away in the tomb as you would allow your old apparel to be put away anywhere.

There is, then, but one ground of concernment about your expected change, and that is, the moral condition of the soul. But beware how your faith may fail just at this point. You are justified by faith; you must also enter into rest by faith. Christ must be all in all, here, as every-where else, in your moral history. Have you special remembrances of sins, grievous sins? Bring them, in contrite confession, to his feet, and remember that consolatory text: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful

and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." This is God's plan, and it is the only one that can meet the needs of any, even of the most saintly soul. To live, then, is Christ, but to die is gain. "Whether living or dying, we are the Lord's."

The end, final safety, is the point of solicitude with the devout soul. In à Kempis' *Imitatione Christi* is a passage which has been supposed to be an allusion to himself, and which, though very simple, is very significant. "When one," he says, "who was in anxiety of mind, often wavering between hope and fear, did once, being oppressed with grief, humbly prostrate himself in a church, before an altar, in prayer, and said within himself, 'O if I knew that I should yet persevere,' he presently heard within him an answer from God, which said, 'What if thou didst know it, what wouldst thou do? Do now what thou wouldst do then, and thou shalt be secure.' And being herewith comforted and strengthened, he committed himself wholly to the will of God; and that noisome anxiety ceased. Neither had he any mind to search curiously any further to know what should befall him; but rather labored to understand what was the perfect and acceptable will of God, for the beginning and accomplishing of every good work."

There is a precious, a very consolatory, lesson of experimental theology in this personal testimony of

the saintly monk of Mount St. Agnes, sent down to us through more than four hundred years.

It would seem that there could be no more complete blessedness on earth than an absolute, an unquestionable assurance of one's final salvation. To know for a certainty that we shall finally enter heaven, and for ever and ever exult in its felicity—what would we not give, what would we not do, for such an inexpressible blessedness? How light would our heaviest trials become under such an assurance? How easy our severest duties of self-denial and labor! If this assurance were communicated to us, in some incontestable manner, say by a voice from heaven, as at the baptism of Christ; or by a visioned angel, as in the annunciation to the Virgin; would not the happy consciousness thrill the heart to its inmost fiber? Could we ever afterward be the same beings we had been before? Would not all life, all the world, be transformed to us? Would we not go on our pilgrim way as walking in an ecstasy? Would we not, like Paul, eagerly desire death itself that we might enter into our certain and ineffable bliss?

Yes, assuredly, child of God, there is no affliction which may be now bowing thee to the dust, which may be about to bow thee down through the remainder of life, that would not be transmuted into great joy, were an indisputable revelation to make it certain to thee that thou shalt, unfailingly, reach

the everlasting gates and tread the golden streets forever, crowned and triumphant!

Preacher of the word, how wouldst thou preach if certain of this divine and infallible election? Thou wouldst become an apostle, shaking the very gates of hell! What would excess of labor, what would failing health, what would beggarly salary, be to thee? Thou wouldst tread down the world beneath thy feet; thou wouldst covet martyrdom; thou wouldst know no higher ambition than that of Paul, to finish thy course, and to mount, were it even in the flames at the stake, to thy certain rest.

Suffering one, languishing in pain or weariness, through weary days and watchful nights, appointed thereto as your test of discipleship, in lessons of patience, resignation, and hope, how resplendent would those days become, and how serene those nights, if you were infallibly certain that all your trials were about to issue in eternal blessedness! As surely as your Redeemer liveth, it shall be so if you, yourself, will it. Press to your heart the blessed assurance; make thus your sufferings a ministry to all about you; fear nothing, and at last die confident in your Lord—a witness for him to the latest moment—and thus fulfill the ministry committed to you of sanctified endurance. The Captain of your salvation was made perfect through suffering. There is, perhaps, nothing in which the power and triumph

of true religion is more demonstratively attested, before the world, than in the affectionate endurance of affliction. This is your appointment, your ministerial commission. Be faithful in it to the end, in healthfulness, in serenity, in sweetness of soul. Rejoice in tribulation, and make all about you acknowledge that the grace of God hath wrought mightily with you in your sorrows. The living will lay your example to heart; and in dying they will learn from you how to overcome all things.

But then, as à Kempis admits, there is contingency about our final safety. The doctrine of the sovereign grace of God is very full of comfort to some minds, in respect to this point, but the metaphysics of the doctrine are equally perplexing to other minds; yet, apart from this consideration, the contingency of our final salvation is subjected, as we have said, to our own volition. God willeth not the death of the sinner. He waiteth to be gracious. He is more solicitous to save us than we are to be saved. He pitieth us as a father pitieth his child. But in his infinite wisdom he has made our whole probation contingent. Contingency is essential to the idea of probation. He has wisely left our final fate conditional on our fidelity to him. And do we not see the wisdom of this fact?

But, though this contingency hangs over all our probation, we can make the final issue of life certain. "Do now what thou wouldst do then, and

thou shalt be secure," says à Kempis. If thou art certain of final salvation on certain conditions, lay hold on the conditions, and thou shalt thereby lay hold, as Paul says, on eternal life.

The whole question comes, then, to this: The contingency of your final salvation inheres really in the contingency of its present conditions or means; but as the latter contingency is entirely subject to your volitional control, you may make, by the grace of God, positive, certain calculations of getting safely into heaven. Rejoice, then, in this fact. Take home to your heart the full assurance of faith. Consecrate to God all property, all talents, all life—and while you maintain by faith the consecration, neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate you from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

You may have much to live for, but O how much more have you to die for! Perhaps already your best ties of life have been transferred across the river, and await you there. There are your God and Saviour; there the saints and angels; there the reign of everlasting love and peace; there God's hand shall wipe tears from all eyes; there the wicked cease from troubling; there the weary are at rest.

When Owen, the eminent theologian, was smitten with a fatal malady a friend approached him, exclaiming, "I am glad to see that you are still in the land of the living!" The dying saint, pointing upward, replied, "I am still in the land of the dying, but I am going to the land of the living!" Death is the birth of the soul into its true, its immortal life. Fear not to go, then. When the hour comes the grace for it will come also; but meanwhile the grace, to be victorious over its fear, may be yours. And your joy may be full in the prospect. For no eye on earth hath seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into any heart outside of Heaven to conceive of how much we have to die for.

The problem of an effective and happy life is, then, an open secret. It is a life of self-consecration to God, and self-sacrifice for man. Death itself is its consummation, its exaltation, to them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honor and immortality.

THE END.

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